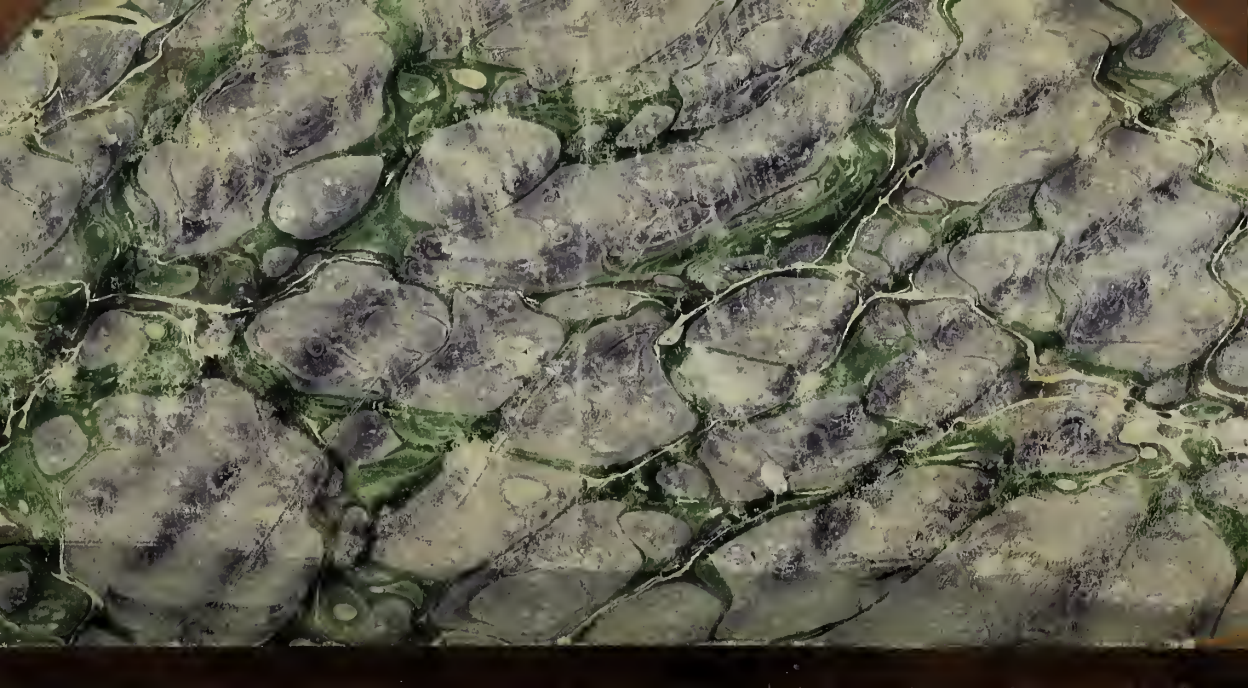

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THE

WORKS

OF THE

Rev. JOHN WESLEY, M.A.

Late Fellow of *Lincoln-College*, OXFORD.

VOLUME VIII.

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An Extract of the

CHRISTIAN PATTERN:

Or, a treatise on the imitation of Christ. Written in Latin by *Thomas a Kempis*.

BOOK II.

CHAP. VI.

Of the joy of a good conscience.

THE glory of a good man is the testimony of a good conscience.

Have a good conscience, and thou shalt ever have joy.

Thou shalt rest sweetly if thy heart condemn thee not.

Never rejoice but when thou hast done well.

Sinners have never true joy, nor feel inward peace; because *There is no peace to the wicked*, saith the Lord.

2. To glory in tribulation is no hard thing for him that loveth; for to glory so, is to glory in the cross of our Lord.

That glory is ſhort which is given and received from men.

Sorrow always accompanieth the glory of the world.

The glory of the good is in their conſciences, and not in the tongues of men. The gladneſs of the juſt is of God, and in God; and their joy is of the truth.

* He enjoyeth great peace of mind, that careth neither for the praiſe nor diſpraiſe of men.

3. He will eaſily be content, whoſe conſcience is pure.

Thou art not the more holy, though thou art praiſed; nor the leſs, though thou art diſpraiſed.

* What thou art, thou art; neither canſt thou be ſaid to be greater than thou art in the ſight of God.

If thou conſidereſt what thou art within, thou wilt not care what men ſay of thee.

Man ſeeth the face, but God looketh into the heart.

Man conſidereth the deeds, but God weigheth the intention.

To do always well, and to diſ-eſteem himſelf, is a ſign of an humble ſoul.

4. He that ſeeketh no witneſs for himſelf from without, doth ſhew that he hath wholly committed himſelf unto God.

For not he who commendeth himſelf is approved, ſaith St. *Paul*; *but whom God commendeth.*

* To

* To walk inwardly with God, and not to love any thing without, is the ſtate of a ſpiritual man.

CHAP. VII.

Of the love of Jeſus.

BLESSED is he that underſtandeth what it is to love *Jeſus*, and to deſpiſe himſelf for *Jeſus*.

Thou oughteſt to leave what thou haſt loved hitherto, for the ſake of Jeſus; for he will be loved alone.

The love of things created is deceitful and inconſtant: the love of Jeſus is faithful and conſtant.

* He that cleaveth unto a creature, ſhall fall when it falls: he that embraceth Jeſus, ſhall ſtand firmly for ever.

Love him, and keep him for thy friend, who, when all go away, will not forſake thee.

* Thou muſt one day be left of all whether thou wilt or no.

2. Keep cloſe to Jeſus, both in life and death, and commit thyſelf unto his faithfulneſs, who, when all fail, can alone help thee.

Thy beloved will not admit of a rival, but will have thy heart alone, and ſit like a king in his own throne.

* Whatſoever affection thou repoſeſt in men out of Jeſus, is all no better than loſt.

* Truſt not, nor lean upon a broken reed; for all fleſh is graſs, and all the glory thereof ſhall wither away.

3. Thou ſhalt quickly be deceived if thou regardeſt only the outward appearance of men.

If in them thou ſeekeſt comfort and profit, thou ſhalt often feel loſs.

If thou ſeekeſt Jeſus in all things, thou ſhalt ſurely find Jeſus.

* If thou ſeekeſt thyſelf, thou ſhalt alſo find thyſelf, but to thy own deſtruction.

For if a man doth not ſeek Jeſus, he doth more hurt to himſelf than the world and all his adverſaries could do.

CHAP. VIII.

Of familiar friendſhip with Jeſus.

* WHEN Jeſus is preſent, all is well; but when Jeſus is abſent every thing is hard.

When Jeſus ſpeaketh not inwardly, we have no true comfort: but if Jeſus ſpeak but one word, we feel much conſolation.

Did not *Mary* preſently riſe from the place where ſhe wept, when *Martha* ſaid unto her, *The maſter is come and calleth for thee?*

Happy the hour when Jeſus calleth from tears to ſpiritual joy!

How

How dry and cold art thou without Jesus! How foolish and vain if thou desirest any thing out of Jesus!

* Is not this a greater loss, than if thou shouldest lose the whole world?

2. What can the world profit thee without Jesus?

To be without Jesus is a grievous hell; and to be with Jesus a sweet paradise.

If Jesus be with thee, no enemy can hurt thee.

He that findeth Jesus, findeth a good treasure, yea, a good above all goods:

And he that looseth Jesus, looseth too much, and more than the whole world.

* He is most poor, that liveth without Jesus: and he is most rich that is well with Jesus.

3. It is a great skill to know how to converse with Jesus, and great wisdom to know and keep Jesus.

Be humble and peaceable, and Jesus will be with thee.

Be devout and quiet, and Jesus will stay with thee.

Thou mayest soon drive away Jesus, if thou turnest aside to outward things.

And if thou shouldest drive him away, unto whom wilt thou fly, and what friend wilt thou seek?

* Without a friend thou canst not live well,

and if Jesus be not above all friends unto thee, thou shalt be very sorrowful and desolate.

Thou dost therefore foolishly, if thou dost trust or rejoice in any other.

It is better for thee to have all the world against thee, than Jesus offended with thee.

Therefore of all things that are dear to thee, let Jesus alone be peculiarly thy beloved.

* Love all for Jesus, but Jesus for himself.

Jesus Christ alone is to be beloved; who alone is faithful above all friends.

For him, and in him, let as well friends as foes be dear unto thee; pray to him for all these, that all may know and love him.

* Never desire to be commended or beloved; for that appertaineth unto God.

* Neither do thou desire that the heart of any should be set on thee; nor do thou set thy heart on any: but let Jesus be in thee, and in every good man.

* 4. Be pure and free within, and entangle not thy heart with any creature.

And truly, unless thou be prevented and drawn by his grace, thou shalt never attain to this, to forsake and cast off all, that thou mayst be united to him alone.

For when the grace of God cometh unto man, then he has power to do all things; and when that retires, he is poor and weak, and as it were, left only to affliction.

Yet in this thou oughtest not to dispair; but

to

to reſign thyſelf to the will of God, and to bear all things that befal thee for the glory of Chriſt: for after winter followeth ſummer, and after a ſtorm a great calm.

CHAP. IX.

Of the want of all comfort.

IT is not hard to deſpiſe human comfort, when we have divine.

It is much to be able to want both human and divine comfort; and for the glory of God to be willing to endure deſolation of heart.

What great matter is it, if thou be chearful and devout at the coming of grace? This hour is to be wiſhed for of all men.

* He rideth eaſily enough whom the grace of God carrieth.

And what marvel, if he feel no burthen, who is bore up by the Almighty?

2. We are always willing to have ſomething for our comfort: and a man doth hardly put off himſelf.

* See thou learn to forſake thy intimate and beloved friend for the love of God.

* Be not grieved when thou art forſaken by a friend, knowing that we all at length muſt be ſeparated from one another.

When a man truſteth in himſelf, he eaſily ſlideth into human comfort:

But a true lover of Chriſt betakes not himſelf to human comfort, but rather ſuſtains hard exerciſes and great labour for Chriſt.

* 3. When therefore ſpiritual comfort is given thee from God, receive it thankfully: but know, it is the gift of God, not thy deſert.

* Be not puffed up, neither do thou preſume vainly: but be rather more humble for the gift, and more wary in all thy actions: for that hour will paſs away, and temptation will ſucceed.

4. *David*, in the preſence of the divine grace, ſaid, *I ſaid in my proſperity, I ſhall never be removed.*

But in the abſence of it, having experienced what he was in himſelf, he adds, *Thou didſt turn thy face from me, and I was troubled.*

Yet doth he not deſpair, but more earneſtly prayeth unto the Lord, and ſaith, *Then cried I unto thee, O Lord, and gat me to my Lord right humbly.*

Laſtly, he receiveth the fruit of his prayer, and witneſſeth that he was heard, ſaying, *The Lord hath heard me, and taken pity on me: the Lord is become my helper.*

But wherein? *Thou haſt turned*, ſaith he, *my heavineſs into joy: thou haſt compaſſed me about with gladneſs.*

5. Whereupon therefore can I hope, or wherein ought I to truſt, but in the great mercy of God alone, and in the only hope of heavenly grace?

For

For whether I enjoy the preſence of good men, or religious brethren, or faithful friends, or holy books, or excellent treatiſes, or ſweet ſongs and hymns, all theſe help little, and have little reliſh, when grace forſaketh me, and I am left in my own poverty.

At ſuch a time there is no better remedy than patience, and renouncing my own will, according to the will of God.

Temptation going before, is wont to be a ſign of enſuing comfort.

And to thoſe that are proved by temptations, heavenly comfort is promiſed. *He that ſhall overcome*, ſaith He, *I will give him to eat of the tree of life.*

6. Divine comfort is given, that a man may be ſtronger to bear adverſity.

There followeth temptation leſt he ſhould grow proud thereof.

* The devil ſleepeth not, neither is the fleſh as yet dead; therefore ceaſe not to prepare thyſelf to the battle, for on thy right hand and on thy left are enemies that never reſt.

CHAP. X.

Of thankfulneſs for the grace of God.

WHY ſeekeſt thou reſt, ſince thou art born to labour?

* Diſpoſe thyſelf to patience, rather than to comfort; and to the bearing of the croſs, rather than to joy.

What worldly man would not willingly receive ſpiritual joy and comfort, if he could always have it?

For ſpiritual comforts exceed all the delights of the world, and pleaſures of the fleſh.

2. Falſe freedom of mind, and truſt in ourſelves are very contrary to heavenly viſitations.

God doth well in giving his grace of conſolation; but man doth evil in not returning all again unto God with thankſgiving.

And therefore the gifts of grace cannot flow in us, becauſe we are not thankful to the giver, and return them not wholly to the fountain.

For grace ever attendeth him that is thankful; and from the proud ſhall be taken that which is given to the humble.

All that is high is not holy; nor all that is ſweet, good; nor every deſire pure; nor every thing that is dear unto us, grateful to God.

* I willingly accept that grace, whereby I may ever become more humble and careful, and more ready to renounce myſelf.

He that is taught by the gift of grace, and inſtructed by the withdrawing thereof, will not dare to attribute any good to himſelf, but will acknowledge himſelf poor and naked.

Give unto God that which is God's, and aſcribe unto thyſelf that which is thine own; that

is,

is, give thanks to God for his grace, and acknowledge that nothing is thine, but only ſin, and the puniſhment due thereto.

3. Set thyſelf always in the loweſt place, and the higheſt ſhall be given thee; for thou canſt not be in the higheſt, till thou haſt been in the loweſt.

The chief ſaints before God are the leaſt in their own eyes: and how much the more glorious, ſo much the more humble.

Thoſe that are firmly ſettled and grounded in God, can no way be proud.

4. Be therefore thankful for the leaſt gift, ſo ſhalt thou receive greater.

Let the leaſt appear unto thee very great, and the moſt contemned as an eſpecial gift.

If thou conſidereſt the worth of the Giver, no gift will ſeem little, or of too mean eſteem. For that is not little which is given by the moſt high God.

Yea, if he ſhould give puniſhment and ſtripes, it ought to be grateful; for he doth it always for our welfare, whatſoever he permitteth to befal us.

* He that deſireth to keep the grace of God, let him be thankful for the grace given, and patient for the taking away thereof. Let him pray that it may return. Let him be wary and humble, leſt he loſe it.

CHAP. XI.

That there are few who love the croſs of Chriſt.

JESUS hath many lovers of his heavenly kingdom; but few bearers of his croſs.

He hath many deſirous of comfort, but few of tribulation.

He findeth many companions of his table, but few of his abſtinence.

All deſire to rejoice with him, but few will ſuffer any thing for him.

Many love Jeſus ſo long as adverſity happens not.

Many praiſe and bleſs him, as long as they receive comforts from him.

But if Jeſus hide himſelf, and leave them but awhile, they fall either into complaint, or dejection.

2. But they that love Jeſus for Jeſus, and not for ſome comfort of their own, bleſs him in all tribulation and anguiſh of heart, as well as in the greateſt comfort.

And although he ſhould never give them comfort, yet they would ever praiſe him and always give him thanks.

3. O how powerful is the pure love of Jeſus, which is mixed with no ſelf-intereſt!

Do they not ſhew themſelves to be rather lovers of themſelves than of Chriſt, that always think of their own pleaſure? Where

Where may one be found that is willing to ſerve God gratis?

4. It is hard to find any one ſo ſpiritual, that is ſtript of the love of all earthly things.

* For where is any one to be found that is indeed free from all affection to creatures?

If a man ſhould give all his ſubſtance, yet it is as nothing.

And if he ſhould do great penances, yet they are but little.

And if he ſhould attain to all knowledge, he is yet far off.

* And if he ſhould be very fervent in devotion, yet there is wanting one thing, which is moſt neceſſary for him.

* What is that? That having left all, he leave himſelf, and go wholly out of himſelf;

And that when he hath done all which he knew ought to be done, he know that he hath done nothing.

5. Let him not think that a great thing, which others may think ſo; but according to truth let him affirm himſelf to be an unprofitable ſervant, as our Saviour hath ſaid, *When ye have done all things that are commanded you, ſay, We are unprofitable ſervants.*

* Yet no man richer, no man more powerful, no man more free, than he that can leave himſelf and all things, and ſet himſelf in the loweſt place.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

Of the royal way of the holy croſs.

THIS ſpeech ſeemeth hard to many, *Renounce thyſelf, take up thy croſs, and follow Jeſus.* But it will be much harder to hear that laſt word, *Depart from me ye curſed, into everlaſting fire.*

This ſign of the croſs ſhall be in heaven, when our Lord ſhall come to judgment.

Then all the ſervants of the croſs ſhall draw near unto Chriſt the Judge with great confidence.

2. Why therefore feareſt thou to take up the croſs, which leadeth to a kingdom?

* In the croſs is ſalvation, in the croſs is life, in the croſs is protection againſt our enemies, in the croſs is heavenly ſweetneſs, in the croſs is ſtrength of mind, in the croſs is joy of ſpirit, in the croſs is the height of virtue, in the croſs is the perfection of holineſs.

There is no ſalvation of the ſoul, nor hope of everlaſting life, but in the croſs.

Take up therefore thy croſs, and follow Jeſus, and thou ſhalt go into life everlaſting.

He is gone before bearing his croſs, and is dead for thee on the croſs; that thou mayſt alſo bear thy croſs, and deſire to die on the croſs with him.

For,

For, if thou dieſt with him, thou ſhalt alſo live with him: and if thou be his companion in pain, thou ſhalt be partaker with him in glory.

* 3. Behold in the croſs all doth conſiſt, and all lieth in our dying upon it: for there is no other way to life, and to true inward peace, but the way of the holy croſs.

* Go where thou wilt, ſeek whatſoever thou wilt, thou ſhalt not find a higher way above, nor a ſafer way below, than the way of the holy croſs.

* Diſpoſe all things according to thy will and judgment; yet thou ſhalt ever find, that thou muſt ſuffer ſomewhat, either willingly, or againſt thy will, and ſo thou ſhalt ever find the croſs.

For either thou ſhalt feel pain in thy body, or in thy ſoul tribulation of ſpirit.

4. Sometimes thou ſhalt be tried of God, ſometimes thou ſhalt be exerciſed by thy neighbour; and often thou ſhalt be irkſome to thyſelf.

Neither canſt thou be delivered by any other remedy or comfort; but ſo long as it pleaſeth God, thou muſt bear it.

For God will have thee learn to ſuffer tribulation; and to ſubject thyſelf wholly to him.

No man hath ſo cordial a feeling of the paſſion of Chriſt, as he who hath ſuffered the like himſelf.

The croſs therefore is always ready, and every where waits for thee.

* Thou

* Thou canſt not eſcape it, whitherſoever thou runneſt; for whereſoever thou goeſt, thou carrieſt thyſelf with thee, and ſhalt ever find thyſelf.

* Both above and below, without and within, which way ſoever thou doſt turn thee, every where thou ſhalt find the croſs; and every where thou muſt have patience, if thou wilt enjoy an everlaſting crown.

* 5. If thou bear the croſs willingly, it will bear thee.

If thou bear it unwillingly thou increaſeſt thy load, and yet thou muſt bear it.

If thou caſt away one croſs, without doubt thou ſhalt find another, and that perhaps a more heavy one.

6. Thinkeſt thou to eſcape that which no man could ever avoid? Which of the ſaints in the world was without croſſes and tribulations?

Verily Jeſus Chriſt our Lord was never one hour without ſuffering ſo long as he lived. Chriſt, ſaith he, ought to ſuffer, and riſe again from the dead, and ſo enter into his glory.

And doſt thou ſeek any other way than this, royal way, which is the way of the holy croſs?

The whole life of Chriſt was a croſs and a martyrdom; and doſt thou ſeek reſt and joy?

* 7. Indeed it is not of man to bear and love the croſs, to keep the body under, to fly honours, to ſuffer reproaches gladly, to deſpiſe himſelf, and to rejoice in being deſpiſed, to bear

all

all adverſities and loſſes, and to deſire no proſperity in this world.

If thou conſidereſt thyſelf, thou art able to perform nothing of this.

But if thou truſteſt in the Lord, ſtrength ſhall be given thee from heaven, and the world and fleſh ſhall be made ſubject to thy command.

Neither ſhalt thou fear the devil, if thou art armed with faith, and beareſt the croſs of Chriſt.

8. Set therefore thyſelf, like a faithful ſervant of Chriſt, to bear manfully the croſs of thy Lord.

Prepare thyſelf to bear many adverſities; for ſo it will be with thee, whereſoever thou be; and ſo ſurely wilt thou find it, whereſoever thou hideſt thyſelf.

* Drink of the cup of the Lord gladly, if thou wilt be his friend.

As for comforts leave them to God; let him do therein as ſhall beſt pleaſe him.

Set thou thyſelf to ſuffer tribulations, and account them the greateſt comforts; for the ſufferings of this life are not worthy of the glory which is to come, although thou alone couldſt ſuffer them all.

* 9. When thou ſhalt come to this, that tribulation ſhall be ſweet unto thee for Chriſt, then think it well with thee, for thou haſt found a paradiſe upon earth.

As long as it is grievous to thee to ſuffer, and thou

thou deſireſt to fly it, ſo long ſhalt thou be ill at eaſe, and the tribulation thou flieſt will follow thee every where.

Although thou hadſt been wrapt into the third heaven with Paul, thou wouldſt not for this be ſecure from ſuffering. *I* (ſaith *Jeſus*) *will ſhew him how great things he muſt ſuffer for my name.* It remaineth, therefore, that thou ſuffer, if thou wilt love Jeſus, and perpetually ſerve him.

10. O that thou wert worthy to ſuffer ſomething for the name of *Jeſus!* How great glory would it be to thee! What joy to all the ſaints of God! How great edification alſo to thy neighbour!

For all commend patience, though few are willing to ſuffer.

With great reaſon thou oughteſt to be willing to ſuffer a little for Chriſt, ſince many ſuffer far greater things for the world.

11. Know for certain that thou art to lead a dying life. And the more every one dieth to himſelf, the more he liveth to God.

No man is fit to attain unto heavenly things, unleſs he ſubmit to ſuffer for Chriſt.

Nothing is more grateful unto God, nothing more wholeſome to thee in this world, than to ſuffer willingly for Chriſt.

And if it were thy choice, thou ſhouldſt rather wiſh to ſuffer adverſities for Chriſt, than to enjoy many comforts; becauſe hereby thou ſhouldſt

ſhouldſt be more like Chriſt, and more conformable to all the ſaints.

For our proficiency conſiſteth not in many ſweetneſſes and comforts, but rather in ſuffering great afflictions and tribulations.

12. If any thing had been better and more profitable to the ſalvation of man than ſuffering, Chriſt ſurely would have ſhewn it by word and example.

But he plainly exhorteth all that follow him, to the bearing of the croſs, and ſaith, *If any will come after me, let him renounce himſelf, and take up the croſs, and follow me.*

So that when we have read and ſearched all, let this be the laſt concluſion, that by many tribulations we muſt enter into the kingdom of God.

An Extract of the

CHRISTIAN PATTERN:

Or, a treatise on the imitation of Christ. Written in Latin by *Thomas a Kempis*.

BOOK III.

CHAP. I.

Of the inward speech of Christ unto a faithful soul.

Christian. I WILL hear what the Lord God will speak in me. Blessed is the soul that heareth the Lord speaking *in her*, and receiveth from his mouth the word of comfort.

Blessed are those ears that receive the whispers of the divine voice, and listen not to the whisperings of the world.

Blessed indeed are those ears that hearken not to the voice which soundeth outwardly, but unto the truth which teacheth inwardly.

Blessed are the eyes which are shut to outward things, but open to those that are internal.

Blessed

Bleſſed are they that delight to be at leiſure for God, and rid themſelves of all worldly impediments.

2. Conſider theſe things, my ſoul, and ſhut up the door of thy ſenſual deſires, that thou mayeſt hear what the Lord God ſpeaketh in thee.

* *Chriſt.* I am thy peace, thy life, and thy ſalvation.

* Keep thyſelf with me, and thou ſhalt find peace.

Leave all tranſitory, and ſeek everlaſting things.

What are all temporal things, but ſnares? And what do all creatures avail thee, if thou be forſaken by thy Creator?

Forſake therefore all earthly things, and labour to pleaſe thy Creator, and be faithful unto him, that thou mayſt attain true happineſs.

CHAP. II.

That truth ſpeaketh inwardly, without noiſe of words.

* *Chriſtian.* SPEAK, Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.

* I am thy ſervant, grant me underſtanding, that I may know thy teſtimonies.

* Incline my heart to the words of thy mouth. Let thy ſpeech diſtil as the dew.

The

The children of Iſrael ſaid unto *Moſes, Speak thou unto us, and we will hear thee: let not the Lord ſpeak unto us, leſt we die.*

* Not ſo, Lord, not ſo, I beſeech thee; but rather with the prophet Samuel, I humbly and earneſtly intreat, *Speak Lord, for thy ſervant heareth.*

* Let not Moſes ſpeak unto me, nor any of the prophets; but do thou rather ſpeak, O Lord God, the inſpirer and enlightner of all the prophets; for thou alone, without them, canſt perfectly inſtruct me; but they, without thee can profit nothing.

2. They, indeed, may ſound forth words, but they cannot give ſpirit.

They ſpeak well; but if thou be ſilent, they inflame not the heart.

They teach the letter, but thou openeſt the ſenſe.

They bring forth myſteries, but thou unlockeſt the meaning of them.

They declare thy commandments, but thou helpeſt to fulfil them.

They ſhew the way, but thou giveſt ſtrength to walk in it.

They work only outwardly, but thou inſtructeſt and enlightneſt the heart.

They water, but thou giveſt the increaſe.

They make a noiſe with words; but thou giveſt to underſtand them.

* 3. Let not therefore Moſes ſpeak unto me, but

but thou, my Lord God, the everlasting truth; lest I die, and prove unfruitful, if I be warned outwardly only, and not inflamed within.

Let not the word heard and not fulfilled, known and not loved, believed and not observed, turn to my condemnation.

Speak therefore, Lord, for thy servant heareth; for thou hast the words of eternal life.

* Speak, unto me, to the comfort of my soul, and to the amendment of my whole life, and to thy praise and glory, and everlasting honour.

CHAP. III.

That the words of God are to be heard with humility, and that many weigh them not.

Christ. SON, hear my words, words of the greatest sweetness, excelling all the knowledge of the philosophers and wise men of this world.

My words are spirit and life, not to be weighed by the understanding of man.

They are to be heard with silence and to be received with all humility and great affection.

Christian. Blessed is the man whom thou shalt instruct, O Lord, and shalt teach thy law: that thou mayest give him rest from the evil days, and that he be not destroyed upon earth.

2. *Christ.* I have taught the prophets from the beginning, and cease not in these days to speak to

every one; but many are hardened, and deaf to my ſpeech:

Moſt men more willingly liſten to the world than to God; and follow ſooner the deſires of the fleſh, than the will of God.

The world promiſeth temporal and ſmall things, and is ſerved with great eagerneſs: I promiſe high and eternal things, and the hearts of men are unmoved.

Who is he that ſerveth and obeyeth me, with ſuch care as the world and the lords therefore are ſerved with?

Bluſh, therefore, ſlothful and complaining ſervant, that they are more eager for deſtruction, than thou for life.

They rejoice more in vanity, than thou in the truth.

And yet they are often fruſtrated of their hope; but my promiſe deceiveth none, nor ſendeth him away empty that truſteth in me.

What I have promiſed, I will give; I will fulfil what I have ſaid, to him that remains faithful in my love to the end.

I am the rewarder of all that are good, and try my ſervants with ſtrong trials.

3. Write my words in thy heart and think diligently of them; for they will be very neceſſary in the time of temptation.

* What thou underſtandeſt not when thou readeſt, thou ſhalt know in the day of viſitation.

I am

I am wont to visit my elect two ways; with temptation, and with comfort.

And I daily read two lessons unto them; one reprehending their vices, another exhorting them to the increase of virtues.

He that hath my words, and despiseth them, hath him that shall judge him at the last day.

* 4. *Christian.* O Lord my God, thou art to me whatsoever is good. Who am I, that I dare speak unto thee? I am thy poorest servant and a most vile worm, much more poor and contemptible than I can express.

* Yet remember, O Lord, that I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing.

Thou alone art good, just, and holy: thou canst do all things, thou fillest all things, only the proud thou sendest empty away.

* Remember thy mercies, and fill my heart with thy grace, thou who willest not that thy works shall be empty.

5. How can I bear myself, unless thou strengthenest me with thy mercy and grace?

Turn not thy face from me; delay not thy visitation; take not away thy comfort, lest my soul become as the thirsty land.

* Lord, teach me to fulfil thy will, teach me to live worthily and humbly in thy sight; for thou art my wisdom, thou dost truly know me, and didst know me before the world was made, and before I was born in the world.

CHAP. IV.

That we ought to live in truth and humility before God.

Chriſt. SON, walk before me in truth, and ever ſeek me in ſimplicity of heart.

He that walketh before me in truth, ſhall be defended from evil; and the truth ſhall deliver him from ſeducers, and from the detractions of the wicked.

If the truth have made thee free, thou ſhalt be free indeed.

Chriſtian. Lord, it is true. According as thou ſaidſt, ſo I beſeech thee let it be with me; let thy truth teach me, and keep me and bring me ſafe to an happy end.

Let it deliver me from all evil affection and inordinate love: and I ſhall walk with thee in great freedom of heart.

2. *Chriſt.* I will teach thee thoſe things that are right and pleaſing in my ſight.

Think of thy ſins with great diſpleaſure and grief, and never eſteem thyſelf any thing for thy good works.

Thou art in very deed a ſinner, thou art ſubject to, and encumbered with many paſſions.

Of thyſelf thou always tendeſt to nothing: thou

thou art quickly caſt down, quickly overcome, quickly troubled, quickly diſſolved.

Thou haſt nothing wherein thou canſt glory, but many things for which thou oughteſt to deſpiſe thyſelf; for thou art much weaker than thou art able to comprehend.

3. Make no account therefore of any thing that thou doſt.

Let nothing ſeem great, nothing precious and wonderful; let nothing ſeem worthy of eſtimation, nothing high, nothing truly praiſe-worthy and deſirable, but that which is everlaſting.

Let the eternal truth above all things pleaſe thee. Let thy own great unworthineſs always diſpleaſe thee.

Fear nothing, fly nothing ſo much as thy vices and ſins.

Some walk not ſincerely in my ſight: but will know my ſecrets. and underſtand the high things of God, neglecting themſelves and their own ſalvation.

Theſe often, becauſe I reſiſt them, fall into great temptations and ſins.

4. Fear the judgments of God; dread the wrath of the Almighty. But diſcuſs not the works of the higheſt. Search thine own iniquities, how much thou haſt offended, and how much good thou haſt neglected.

Some place their religion only in books, ſome in images, ſome in outward forms and ceremonies.

Some have me in their mouths, but little in their hearts.

There are others that being illuminated in their underſtandings, and purged in their affection; continually pant after things eternal; theſe perceive what the ſpirit of truth ſpeaketh in them.

Becauſe it teacheth them to deſpiſe earthly, and love heavenly things; to neglect the world, and all the day and night to deſire heaven.

CHAP. V.

Of the wonderful effects of divine love.

* *Chriſtian.* I Praiſe thee, O heavenly Father, Father of my Lord Jeſus Chriſt, for that thou haſt vouchſafed to remember me a poor creature.

O Father of mercies, and God of all comfort, thanks be unto thee, who, with thy comfort refreſheſt me, unworthy of all comfort.

I ever bleſs and glorify thee, with thy only begotten Son, and the Holy Ghoſt, for ever and ever.

* O Lord God, the holy lover of my ſoul, when thou ſhalt come into my heart, all that is within me will rejoice.

Thou art my glory and the joy of my heart.

Thou art my hope and refuge in the day of my tribulation.

2. But becauſe I am ſtill weak in love, I have need

need therefore to be ſtrengthened and comforted by thee.

Viſit me therefore often, and inſtruct we with thy holy diſcipline.

* Deliver me from evil paſſions, and heal my heart of all inordinate affections; that being healed within, I may be made fit to love, ſtrong to ſuffer, and conſtant to perſevere.

3. *Chriſt.* Love is a great thing, which alone maketh every burden light, and beareth all the viciſſitudes of life.

* For it carrieth a burden without a burden, and maketh every thing that is bitter, ſweet and ſavoury.

The love of Jeſus impelleth to do great things, and ſtirreth up continually to deſire greater perfection.

Love will be aloft, and not kept down with any earthly thing.

Love will be free and looſe from all worldly affection, leſt its inward ſight be hindered, leſt it be entangled by any temporal proſperity, or ſubdued by adverſity.

* Nothing is ſweeter than love, nothing is ſtronger, nothing higher, nothing more large, nothing more pleaſant, nothing fuller nor better in heaven or in earth.

Becauſe love is born of God, and cannot reſt but in God, above all creatures.

4. He that loveth, flieth, runneth and rejoiceth; he is free and not bound.

* He giveth all for all, and hath all in all; for he reſteth in the ſupreme One, from whom all good proceedeth.

He reſpecteth not the gifts, but turneth himſelf above all goods unto the Giver.

Love often knoweth no meaſure, but is inflamed above all meaſure.

* Love feeleth no burden, weigheth no pains, deſireth above its ſtrength; complaineth not of impoſſibility; for it thinketh all things poſſible.

* It is therefore able to undertake all things, and performeth and bringeth many things to paſs; whereas he that doth not love, fainteth and ſinketh under them.

* 5. Love watcheth, and ſleeping ſleepeth not.

* Being tired is not weary, ſtraitened is not preſſed: frightened is not diſturbed: but like a lively flame, it burſteth out aloft, and ſecurely paſſeth through all.

If any one loveth, he knoweth what this meaneth.

The ardent affection of the ſoul crieth aloud in the ears of God, when it ſaith, *My God, my love, thou art wholly mine, and I am wholly thine.*

* 6. *Chriſtian.* Enlarge me in love, that with the inward mouth of my heart I may taſte how ſweet it is to love, and to be melted and ſwim in thy love.

Let me be poſſeſſed by love, mounting above myſelf with exceſſive fervour and admiration.

Let

Let me ſing the ſong of love, let me follow thee on high, my beloved: let my ſoul die away in thy praiſe, rejoicing through love.

* Let me love thee more than myſelf, and not myſelf but for thee, and all in thee that truly love thee, as the law of love commandeth, which ſhineth out from thee.

* 5. *Chriſt.* Love is ſwift, ſincere, pious, pleaſant, and delightful: ſtrong, patient, faithful, prudent, long-ſuffering, manly; and never ſeeking itſelf.

For where one ſeeketh himſelf, there he falleth from love.

* Love is circumſpect, humble, and upright: not ſoft, nor light, nor attending unto vain things; but ſober, chaſte, conſtant, quiet, and guarded in all the ſenſes.

Love is ſubject and obedient to ſuperiors, vile, and deſpicable to itſelf, devout and thankful unto God, truſting and hoping always in him.

* 8. He that is not ready to ſuffer all things, and to ſtand to the will of his beloved, is not worthy to be called a lover.

A lover ought to embrace willingly all that is hard and diſtaſteful for his beloved.

CHAP. VI.

Of a proof of a true lover.

Chriſt. SON, thou art not a valiant and prudent lover.

Chriſtian. Wherefore, Lord?

Chriſt. Becauſe thou giveſt over thy undertakings for a ſmall difficulty, and too greedily ſeekeſt after comfort.

A valiant lover ſtandeth firmly in temptations, and giveth not credit to the crafty perſuaſions of the enemy.

2. A prudent lover conſidereth not ſo much the gift of his lover, as the love of the giver.

He regardeth the love more than the value, and valueth his beloved above all his gifts.

A generous lover reſteth not in the gift, but in me above every gift.

3. Know that thy ancient enemy doth ever ſtrive to hinder thy deſire to good, and to divert thee from all religious exerciſes; to wit, from the devout memory of my paſſion, from the profitable remembrance of thy ſins, from the guard of thine own heart, and from the firm purpoſe of profiting in virtue.

He injecteth many evil thoughts, that he may cauſe a wearineſs in thee, to drive thee from prayer and holy reading.

Humble prayer is diſpleaſing unto him; and if he could, he would cauſe thee to ceaſe from receiving the ſacrament.

Care not for him, although he ſhould often ſet ſnares for thee.

If he ſuggeſt evil thoughts, ſay unto him,

Away unclean ſpirit; bluſh, miſerable wreich; thou art very unclean, that bringeſt ſuch things to mine ears. *Away*

Away from me, thou shalt have no part in me; Jesus shall be with me as a strong warrior, and thou shalt stand confounded.

The Lord is my light and my salvation, whom shall I fear?

Though hosts of men rise up against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid.

The Lord is my helper and my Redeemer.

CHAP. VII.

That grace is to be guarded by humility.

Christ. THINK, when thou art in grace, how miserable thou art wont to be without grace.

The way of man is not in his power, but it belongeth to God to comfort when he will, and how much he will, and whom he will; as it shall please him, and no more.

They that are unacquainted in the way of the Lord, unless they govern themselves by the counsel of discreet persons, may easily be deceived and overthrown.

2. And if they will rather follow their own judgment, than give credit to others that are experienced, the event will be dangerous.

Christian. Shall I speak unto my Lord who am dust and ashes?

If I esteem better of myself, behold thou stand-

eſt againſt me, and my iniquities bear true witneſs againſt me, neither can I contradict it.

But if I know myſelf to be nothing, if I renounce all ſelf-eſteem, and account myſelf to be but duſt; thy grace will be favourable unto me, and thy light will be near my heart.

And all ſelf-eſteem, how little ſoever, ſhall be ſwallowed up, and periſh everlaſtingly.

Thou ſheweſt myſelf unto me, what I am, and what I have been; for I am nothing, and I knew it not.

And if I be left to myſelf, behold I become all weakneſs.

But if thou lookeſt upon me, I am made ſtrong.

And it is a great marvel, that I am ſuddenly lifted up, and ſo graciouſly embraced by thee, who by my own weight always ſink downward.

3. Thy love is the cauſe thereof, freely preventing me, and relieving me in ſo many neceſſities; preſerving me alſo from grievous dangers, and delivering me from innumerable evils.

For by inordinate loving myſelf, I loſt myſelf; and by ſeeking thee alone, and loving thee, I have found both myſelf and thee, and by that love have more deeply brought myſelf to nothing.

For thou, O moſt ſweet Lord, dealeſt with me above all deſert, above all that I dare hope or aſk.

* 4. Bleſſed be thou, my God; for although I be unworthy of any benefits; yet thy bounty, and thy infinite goodneſs, never ceaſeth to do good even to the ungrateful, and them that are far from thee.

* Turn us unto thee, O Lord, that we may be thankful, humble, and holy; for thou art our power, and our ſtrength, and our ſalvation.

CHAP. VIII.

That all things are to be referred unto God, as unto their laſt end.

Chriſt. SON, I ought to be thy laſt end, if thou deſireſt to be truly bleſſed.

By this intention thy affection ſhall be purified, which is often inordinately bent down to itſelf, and unto creatures.

For if in any thing thou ſeekeſt thyſelf, thou ſoon falleſt into a langour.

Refer therefore all things unto me, for I am he that hath given all.

* 2. Out of me, as out of a living fountain, the little and the great, the poor and the rich, draw the water of life: and they that willingly and freely ſerve me, ſhall receive grace for grace.

But he that will glory out of me, or be delighted in any good that tends not to me, ſhall not

not be grounded in true joy, nor enlarged in his heart, but ſhall be many ways incumbered and ſtraitned.

Thou oughteſt therefore to aſcribe nothing of good unto thyſelf, nor attribute goodneſs unto any man; but give all unto God, without whom man hath nothing.

I have beſtowed all, and will that all be returned unto me again: and with great ſtrictneſs, I require thanks.

3. This is the truth that putteth to flight vain-glory.

And if true love enter in, there ſhall be no envy, or ſtraitneſs of heart, neither ſhall there be any place for ſelf-love.

If thou art truly wiſe, in me alone thou wilt rejoice, in me alone thou wilt hope: for none is good but God alone, who is to be praiſed above all things, and to be bleſſed in all.

CHAP. IX.

That it is a ſweet thing to deſpiſe the world, and ſerve God.

Chriſtian. NOW I will ſpeak again, O Lord, and will not be ſilent; I will ſpeak in the ears of my God, my Lord, and my King that is on high.

* O how great is the abundance of thy goodneſs,

neſs, O Lord, which thou haſt laid up for thoſe that fear thee!

* But what art thou to them that love thee? What to them that ſerve thee with their whole heart?

* Truly, unſpeakable is the ſweetneſs of contemplating thee, which thou beſtoweſt on them that love thee.

In this chiefly thou haſt ſhewed me the ſweetneſs of thy love: in that when I was not, thou madeſt me; and when I went aſtray a far off from thee, thou broughteſt me back again, that I might ſerve thee.

2. O fountain of everlaſting love, what ſhall I ſay of thee?

How can I forget thee, that haſt vouchſafed to remember me, even after I had pined away, and periſhed?

Thou haſt ſhewed mercy to thy ſervant beyond all my expectation.

Thou haſt exhibited thy favour and friendſhip beyond all my deſert.

What ſhall I return to thee for this favour?

Is it much that I ſhould ſerve thee, whom all creatures are bound to ſerve?

* It ought not to ſeem much unto me to ſerve thee: but this rather ſeemeth much and marvellous unto me, that thou vouchſafeſt to receive into thy ſervice one ſo poor and unworthy, and to join him with thy beloved ſervants.

* 3. Behold, all is thine which I have, and whereby I ſerve thee.

* And yet, contrary-wiſe, thou rather ſerveſt me, than I thee.

* Behold heaven and earth, which thou haſt created for the ſervice of man, are ready at hand, and all daily perform whatſoever thou doſt command.

* And this is little: thou haſt alſo appointed the angels to the ſervice of man.

* But that which excelleth all this is, that thou thyſelf haſt vouchſafed to ſerve man, and haſt promiſed to give thyſelf unto him.

4. What ſhall I give thee for all theſe thouſands of benefits?

Would I could ſerve thee all the days of my life!

Would I were able at leaſt for one day, to do thee worthy ſervice!

Verily, thou art worthy of all ſervice, of all honour, and everlaſting praiſe.

* Verily, thou art my Lord, and I thy poor ſervant, that am bound to ſerve thee with all my might; neither ought I ever to be weary of praiſing thee.

* This I wiſh to do, this I deſire: and whatſoever is wanting unto me, vouchſafe, I beſeech thee to ſupply.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

That the desires of our hearts are to be examined.

Christ. SON, thou must still learn many things, which thou hast not yet well learned.

Christian. What are those, Lord?

Christ. That thou frame thy desires wholly according to my pleasure: and be not a lover of thyself, but a zealous follower of my will.

Thy desires often inflame thee, and that vehemently; but consider, whether thou art moved rather for my honour, or for thine own profit.

If I be the cause, thou wilt be well content, howsoever I shall ordain:

But if there lurk in thee any self-seeking, behold this is it that hindereth thee, and weigheth thee down.

2. Beware therefore thou lean not too much upon any desire conceived without asking my counsel; lest afterward it repent thee, and thou dislikest what before pleased thee, and which thou zealously desiredst as the best.

For every affection that seemeth good, is not presently to be followed: nor every affection that at first seemeth evil to be avoided.

It is expedient to use a restraint even in good desires and endeavours, lest by importunity of desire thou incur distraction of mind, and by want

want of ſelf-government be a ſcandal to others, or being gainſayed by others, thou be ſuddenly troubled and fall.

But thou oughteſt to uſe violence, and reſiſt manfully thy ſenſual appetites, and reſpect not, what the fleſh would or would not: but rather to labour, that even perforce it be ſubject to the ſpirit.

* Thou duſt, learn to obey.

* Thou earth and clay, learn to humble thyſelf, to bow down beneath the feet of all men.

Learn to break thine own will, and to yield thyſelf to all ſubjection.

3. Be zealous againſt thyſelf, and ſuffer not pride to live in thee.

* Shew thyſelf ſo lowly, ſuch a little child, that every one may go over thee, and tread thee as dirt under their feet.

* Vain man, what haſt thou to complain of?

* Vile ſinner, what canſt thou anſwer to them who reproach thee, who haſt ſo often offended God, and ſo many times deſerved hell?

But mine eye hath ſpared thee, becauſe thy ſoul was precious in my ſight:

That thou mighteſt know my love and always remain thankful for my benefits.

And that thou mighteſt continually ſtudy true ſubjection and humility, and patiently endure to be deſpiſeth.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

Of the considering the secret judgments of God, lest we be exalted on account of our good deeds.

Christian. THOU thundereſt forth thy judgments over me, O Lord; thou ſhakeſt all my bones with fear and trembling, and my ſoul is ſore afraid.

I ſtand aſtoniſhed, when I conſider that the heavens are not pure in thy ſight.

If thou haſt found wickedneſs in angels, and haſt not pardoned them, what ſhall become of me?

Stars fell from heaven; and am I, who am duſt, proud?

2. There is therefore no ſanctity, if thou, O Lord, withdraweſt thy hand.

No wiſdom availeth, if thou ceaſeſt to govern.

No ſtrength helpeth, if thou leaveſt to defend.

No chaſtity is ſecure, if thou doſt not protect it.

No vigilance profits, if thy ſacred watchfulneſs be not preſent.

For if we be left, we ſink and periſh: but if thou viſiteſt us, we are raiſed up and live.

We are inconſtant, but by thee we are eſtabliſhed; we grow cold, but by thee we are inflamed.

3. O

3. O how meanly ought I to think of myſelf! How nothing ought I to eſteem it, if I ſeem to have any good!

O Lord, with what profound humility ought I to ſubmit myſelf to thy inſcrutable judgments: where I find myſelf to be a very nothing! O unmeaſurable height! O unpaſſable ſea, where I find myſelf to be altogether nothing! Where then is the hiding-place of glory? Where is the confidence I once conceived of my own virtue?

All glorying is ſwallowed up in the depths of thy judgments over me.

4. What is all fleſh in thy ſight?

Shall the clay glory againſt him that frameth it?

How can he be lifted up with vain words, whoſe heart is truly ſubject to God?

All the world cannot lift him up whom the truth hath ſubjected unto itſelf; neither ſhall he be moved with the tongues of all his praiſers, that hath ſet his whole hope upon God.

For as for them that ſpeak, behold they are all nothing; they ſhall paſs away, as doth the ſound of their words: but the truth of the Lord remaineth for ever.

CHAP. XII.

How we are to be affected, and what we are to ſay, in every thing which we deſire.

Chriſt. SON, ſay thus, in every thing; Lord if it be pleaſing to thee, let this be thus. Lord,

Lord, if it be to thy honour, let this be done in thy name.

Lord, if thou feeſt it expedient for me, and knoweſt it to be profitable, then grant me to uſe this unto thy honour;

But if thou knoweſt it will be hurtful unto me, and not profitable to the health of my ſoul, take away this deſire from me:

For every deſire proceedeth not from the Holy Ghoſt, though it ſeemeth unto man right and good.

It is hard to judge rightly, whether a good ſpirit, or the contrary, incline thee to deſire this or that, or whether thou art not moved by thine own ſpirit.

Many are deceived in the end, who at firſt ſeemed to be led by a good ſpirit.

2. Always therefore, whatſoever ſeemeth deſirable to thee, let it be deſired and prayed for in the fear of God, and with humility of heart.

And above all, thou oughteſt to reſign thyſelf, and to commit the whole unto Me, and ſay,

"Lord, thou knoweſt what is beſt, let this or that be done as thou pleaſeſt."

Give what thou wilt, and how much thou wilt, and when thou wilt.

Deal with me as thou thinkeſt good, and as beſt pleaſeth thee, and is moſt for thy honour.

Set me where thou wilt, and deal with me in all things according to thy will.

I am

I am in thy hand; turn me, and turn me again, which way ſoever thou pleaſeſt.

Behold, I am thy ſervant, prepared for all things; for I deſire not to live unto myſelf, but unto thee: and O that I could do it worthily and perfectly!

3. Grant me thy grace, O moſt gracious Jeſus, that it may be with me, and labour with me, and continue with me unto the end.

Grant me always to deſire and will that which is moſt acceptable unto thee, and beſt pleaſeth thee.

Let thy will be mine, and let my will ever follow thine, and agree perfectly with it.

Let my will and nill be all one with thine, and let me not be able to will or nill any thing elſe, but what thou willeſt or nilleſt.

4. Grant that I may die to all things that are in the world, and for thy ſake love to be contemned, and not be known in this world.

Grant that above all things that can be deſired, I may reſt in thee, may quiet my heart in thee.

Thou art the true peace of the heart, thou art the only reſt; out of thee all things are troubleſome and unquiet.

In this very peace, that is in thee, the one eternal good, may I ſleep and reſt. *Amen.*"

CHAP.

CHAP. XIII.

That true comfort is to be ſought in God alone.

MY ſoul, thou canſt not be fully comforted, but in God, the comforter of the poor, and the helper of the humble.

Wait awile, O my ſoul, wait the divine promiſe, and thou ſhalt have abundance of all good things.

* Uſe temporal things, deſire eternal.

Thou canſt not be ſatisfied with any temporal good, becauſe thou art not created to enjoy them.

Although thou hadſt all created good, yet wouldſt thou not be happy or bleſſed; but in God, that hath created all things, thy whole happineſs conſiſteth.

Vain and ſhort is all human comfort.

Bleſſed and real is that comfort, which is received inwardly from the truth.

A devout man every where carrieth with him Jeſus his comforter, and ſaith unto him, "Be preſent with me, Lord Jeſus, in every place and time.

* Let this be my comfort, to be willing to want all human comfort.

And if thy comfort be wanting, let thy will, and juſt proving of me, be unto me as the greateſt comfort: for thou wilt not be angry always, neither wilt thou threaten for ever."

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

That all our care is to be caſt on God.

Chriſt. SON, ſuffer me to do with thee what I pleaſe: I know what is expedient for thee.

Thou thinkeſt like a man; thou judgeſt in many things as human affection perſuadeth thee.

Chriſtian. Lord, what thou ſayeſt is true. Thy care for me is greater than all the care that I can take for myſelf.

* For he ſtandeth very totteringly, that caſteth not his whole care upon thee.

Lord, ſo that my will may remain right and firm towards thee, do with me whatſoever ſhall pleaſe thee.

For it cannot but be good, whatſoever thou doſt with me.

2. If it be thy will I ſhould be in darkneſs, be thou bleſſed; and if it be thy will I ſhould be in light, be thou again bleſſed.

* If thou vouchſafeſt to comfort me, be thou bleſſed; and if thou wilt afflict me, be thou equally bleſſed.

Chriſt. Son, ſuch muſt be thy diſpoſition, if thou wilt walk with me.

Thou muſt be as ready to ſuffer as to rejoice.

Thou oughteſt to be as willing to be poor and needy, as full and rich.

3. *Chriſtian.*

3. *Chriſtian.* Lord, I willingly ſuffer for thee whatſoever thy pleaſure is ſhall befall me.

I will receive indifferently from thy hand good and evil, ſweet and bitter, delightful and ſorrowful, and give thee thanks for all that befalleth me.

* Keep me from all ſin, and I will neither fear death nor hell.

So thou doſt not for ever caſt me from thee, nor blot me out of the book of life, what tribulation ſoever befalleth me ſhall not hurt me.

CHAP. XV.

Of ſuffering injuries; and who is proved to be truly patient.

Chriſt. WHAT is it thou ſayeſt, ſon? Ceaſe to complain, conſidering my paſſion, and that of my other ſaints.

Thou haſt not yet reſiſted unto blood.

Do not ſay, I cannot ſuffer theſe things at the hand of ſuch a perſon, nor ought I to ſuffer theſe things; for he hath done me great wrong, and upbraided me with thoſe things which I never thought of: but of another I will willingly ſuffer.

Such a thought is fooliſh, it conſidereth not the virtue of patience, nor by whom it ſhall be

crowned; but rather weigheth the perſons and the injuries offered.

* 2. He is not truly patient, that will not ſuffer but as much as he thinketh good, and by whom he liſteth.

* But the truly patient man mindeth not by whom he is exerciſed, whether by his ſuperior, or his equal, or by his inferior: whether by a good and holy man, or by a perverſe and unworthy perſon.

* But indifferently from all creatures, how much ſoever, or how often ſoever any adverſity befalleth him, he taketh all thankfully from the hands of God, and eſteemeth it great gain;

* Seeing nothing how little ſoever, ſo it be ſuffered for God, ſhall paſs without its reward.

3. Be thou therefore prepared for the fight, if thou wilt have the victory.

Without a combat thou canſt not attain unto the crown of patience.

If thou wilt not ſuffer, thou refuſeſt to be crowned;

But if thou deſireſt to be crowned, fight manfully and endure patiently.

Without labour there is no coming to reſt, nor without fighting can victory be obtained.

4. *Chriſtian.* Lord, let that be made poſſible to me by thy grace, which ſeemeth impoſſible to me by nature.

Thou knoweſt, that I can ſuffer but little, and that I am quickly diſmayed when a ſmall adverſity ariſeth.

Let

Let every exercise of tribulation be made amiable unto me, and be welcome for thy name; for to suffer and to be troubled for thy sake is very profitable for my soul.

I will confess against me my unrighteousness; I will confess unto thee, O Lord, my infirmities.

It is often a small matter that grieveth and dejecteth me.

I purpose to act with courage; but when a small temptation cometh, it bringeth me into great straits.

It is sometimes a very trifle, from whence great temptations proceed.

And whilst I think myself safe, when I least expect it, I am overcome with a small blast.

5. Behold, therefore, Lord, my frailty, every way known unto thee.

Have mercy on me, and deliver me out of the mire, that I stick not fast therein, and that I may not be cast down altogether.

6. O mighty God of Israel, the zealous lover of faithful souls, let it please thee to consider the labour and sorrow of thy servant, and assist him in all whatsoever he undertaketh.

Strengthen me with heavenly strength, lest the old man, the miserable flesh, not yet fully subject to the Spirit, prevail.

CHAP. XVI.

That we are to reſt in God above all his gifts and benefits.

Chriſtian. ABOVE all things, and in all things, O my ſoul, reſt in the Lord: for he is the everlaſting reſt of the ſaints.

* Grant me, O moſt ſweet and loving Jeſus, to reſt in thee above all creatures:

Above all health and beauty, above all glory and honour, above all power and dignity, above all knowledge and ſubtilty, above all riches and arts, above all joy and gladneſs, above all hope and promiſe, above all deſert and deſire!

Above all gifts and preſents that thou canſt impart unto us;

Above all joy and triumph, that the mind of man can receive and feel:

Laſtly, above the angels and arch-angels, and above all the hoſt of heaven, above all viſible and inviſible things, and above all that thou art not, O my God.

* 2. For, thou my Lord God, art beſt above all, thou alone art moſt high, thou alone moſt powerful, thou alone moſt full and ſufficient, thou alone moſt ſweet and overflowing with comfort, thou alone moſt lovely and loving, thou alone moſt noble and glorious above all things,

in

in whom all good things are together, and moſt perfectly, and ever have been and ſhall be:

And therefore it is too little whatſoever thou beſtoweth on me beſides thyſelf, or revealeſt unto me of thyſelf, whilſt thou are not ſeen and fully obtained;

For ſurely my heart cannot truly reſt, unleſs it reſts in thee, and ſurmount all gifts and creatures whatſoever.

3. O my beloved bridegroom, Jeſus Chriſt the moſt pure lover, the governor of all creatures!

O that I had the wings of true liberty, that I might fly away and reſt in thee!

O when ſhall it be granted me in quietneſs of mind, to ſee how ſweet thou art my Lord God:

* When ſhall I fully gather up myſelf into thee, that by reaſon of my love to thee, I may not feel myſelf, but thee alone, above all ſenſe or meaſure, in a manner not known unto every one?

4. O Jeſus, the brightneſs of the eternal glory, thou comfort of the baniſhed ſoul, with thee is my tongue without a voice, and my ſilence ſpeaketh unto thee.

How long doth my Lord delay to come?

Let him come unto me, his poor ſervant, and make me glad.

Let him put forth his hand, and deliver me from all trouble.

*Come, O come! for without thee I ſhall have no joyful hour; for thou art my joy, and without thee my table is empty.

A wretched creature I am, until thou comforteſt me with the light of thy preſence, and ſetteſt me at liberty.

5. Let others ſeek what they pleaſe inſtead of thee; but for me nothing elſe doth, or ſhall delight me, but thou only, my God, my hope, my everlaſting ſalvation.

I will not hold my peace, nor ceaſe to pray, until thy grace returneth, and thou ſpeakeſt inwardly unto me.

Chriſt. Behold I am here; behold I come unto thee, becauſe thou haſt called upon me.

Thy tears and the deſire of thy ſoul, thy humiliation and the contrition of thy heart, have brought me unto thee.

Chriſtian. Lord, I have called thee, and have deſired to enjoy thee, being ready to caſt away all things for thee.

For thou firſt haſt ſtirred me up, that I might ſeek thee.

Bleſſed be thou, therefore, O Lord, that haſt ſhewed thy goodneſs to thy ſervant, according to the multitude of thy mercies.

*6. What hath thy ſervant more to ſay before thee, but greatly to humble himſelf in thy ſight, always mindful of his own iniquity and vileneſs?

For

For there is none like unto thee in all that is wonderful in heaven and earth.

Thy works are very good, thy judgments true, and by thy providence all things are governed.

Praise therefore, and glory, be unto thee, O Wisdom of the Father! Let my mouth, my soul, and all creatures together praise and bless thee.

CHAP. XVII.

Of the remembrance of the manifold benefits of God.

Christian. OPEN, O Lord, my heart in thy law, and teach me to walk in thy commandments.

Grant me to understand thy will, and remember thy benefits; that henceforward I may be able worthily to give thee thanks.

But I know and confess that I am not able to give thee due thanks for the least of thy favours.

I am less than the least of all thy benefits; and when I consider thy bounty, the greatness thereof maketh my spirit to faint.

2. All that we have in our souls and bodies, and whatsoever we possess outwardly or inwardly, naturally or supernaturally, are thy benefits,

and ſpeak thee bountiful, merciful, and good, from whom we have received all good things.

Although one have received more, another leſs, all notwithſtanding are thine, and without thee even the leaſt cannot be had.

He that hath received greater, cannot extol himſelf above others; for he is greater and better, that aſcribeth leaſt unto himſelf, and is more humble and devout in rendering thanks.

And he that eſteemeth himſelf vileſt of all men, is fitter to receive greater bleſſings.

3. And he that hath received fewer, ought not to repine, nor envy them that have greater ſtore; but attend rather unto thee, and highly praiſe thy goodneſs, who beſtoweſt thy gifts ſo bountifully, ſo freely, and ſo willingly, without reſpect of perſons.

All things proceed from thee, and therefore in all things thou art to be praiſed.

Thou knoweſt what is fit to be given to every man, and why one hath leſs and another more.

It is not ours, but thine to judge, who doſt exactly know what is meet for every one.

4. Nothing therefore ought ſo to rejoice him that loveth thee, and acknowledgeth thy benefits, as thy will in him, and the good pleaſure of thy eternal appointment.

With this he ought to be ſo contented and comforted, that he would be as willing to be the leaſt, as another is to be the greateſt.

He

He is as peaceable and contented in the laſt as in the firſt place.

* He is as willing to be deſpiſed and contemned, and to be of no eſteem or account, as to be preferred in honour above all others, and to be greater in the world.

For thy will, and the love of thy glory, ought to be preferred above all things:

And to comfort him more, and pleaſe him better than all the benefits which either he hath received or may receive.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of four things that bring much peace.

Chriſt. SON, now will I teach thee the way of peace, and true liberty.

* Endeavour to do rather the will of another than thy own.

* Ever chuſe rather to have leſs than more.

* Always ſeek the loweſt place, and to be beneath every one.

* Continually wiſh and pray, that the will of God may be wholly fulfilled in thee.

Behold ſuch a man entereth into the bonds of peace and quietneſs.

2. *Chriſtian.* Lord, this thy ſhort ſpeech containeth much perfection.

Thou, who canſt do all things, and ever loveſt the profiting of my ſoul, increaſe in me thy grace, that I may fulfil thy works, and work out my own ſalvation.

My Lord God, be not far from me; my God, conſider and help me; for ſundry thoughts have riſen up againſt me, afflicting my ſoul.

How ſhall I paſs through them without hurt? How ſhall I utterly break them?

Chriſt. I will go before thee, and will humble the great ones of the earth. I will open the doors of the priſon, and reveal unto thee hidden ſecrets.

Chriſtian. Do Lord, as thou ſayeſt, and let all evil thoughts fly before thy face.

This is my hope, my only comfort to fly unto thee in every tribulation; to truſt in thee, to call upon thee from my heart, and to expect patiently thy comfort.

*3. Enlighten me, O good Jeſus, with a clear ſhining inward light, and drive away all darkneſs from the habitation of my heart.

Repreſs my wandering thoughts, and drive away thoſe temptations which violently aſſault me.

Fight ſtrongly for me, and vanquiſh thoſe evil beaſts, theſe enticing luſts, that ſo peace may be obtained by thy power, and abundance of thy praiſe found in the holy court of a pure conſcience.

* Command the winds, and the tempeſts; ſay unto

unto the sea, Be still, and to the north wind, Blow not, and there shall be a great calm.

* 4. Send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may shine upon the earth; for I am as the earth, without form, and void, until thou enlighten me.

* Pour out thy grace from above, let thy heavenly dew distill upon my heart.

* Supply streams of devotion, to water the face of the earth, that it may bring forth good and excellent fruit.

Lift up my mind, which is pressed down by the weight of my sins. Draw up my whole desire to heavenly things; that having tasted the sweetness of supernatural happiness, it may be irksome to me even to think of earthly vanities.

5. Snatch me, and deliver me from all the unlasting comfort of creatures; for no created thing can fully comfort and quiet my desire.

* Join me unto thee with an inseparable band of love; for thou alone dost satisfy him that loveth thee, and without thee all things are frivolous.

CHAP. XIX.

Of avoiding curious enquiry into the life of others.

Christ. SON, be not curious, trouble not thyself with idle cares.

What is this or that to thee? Follow thou me.

For what is it to thee whether that man be ſuch or no? Whether this man do or ſpeak this or that?

Thou ſhalt not need to anſwer for others, but ſhalt give account of thyſelf.

Behold I know every one, and ſee all things that are under the ſun, and underſtand how it is with every one; what he thinks, what he deſires, and at what he aims.

All things therefore are to be committed unto me; but do thou keep thyſelf in peace, and let him that acts, act as he will.

Whatſoever he ſhall have done or ſaid ſhall fall upon himſelf, for he cannot deceive me.

2. Be not careful for the ſhadow of a great name, or for the friendſhip of many; nor for the affection of particular men:

For theſe things diſtract and greatly darken the heart.

I would willingly utter my words, and reveal my ſecrets unto thee, if thou didſt diligently obſerve my coming, and open the door of thy heart unto me.

Be careful and watch in prayer, and humble thyſelf in all things.

CHAP. XX.

Wherein firm peace of heart and true profiting conſiſteth.

Chriſt. SON, I have ſaid, *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you.*

All deſire peace, but all care not for thoſe things that appertain unto peace.

My peace is with the humble and meek of heart; thy peace doth conſiſt in much patience.

If thou wilt hear me, and follow my voice, thou mayeſt enjoy much peace.

Chriſtian. What then ſhall I do, Lord?

* *Chriſt.* In every thing attend unto thyſelf, what thou doſt, and what thou ſayeſt; and direct thy whole intention unto this, that thou mayeſt pleaſe me alone, and deſire to ſeek nothing beſides me.

Of the ſayings and doings of others, judge not raſhly, neither do thou entangle thyſelf with things not committed unto thee: and doing thus, thou ſhalt be little or ſeldom troubled.

Yet do not eſteem highly of thyſelf, or account thyſelf to be eſpecially beloved, if thou be in great devotion and ſweetneſs; for the profiting and perfection of a man conſiſts not in theſe things.

2. *Chriſt.*

2. *Chriſt.* Wherein then Lord?

Chriſtian. In offering thyſelf with thy whole heart unto the will of God, not ſeeking thine own, neither in great nor little, neither in time nor in eternity.

So that thou keepeſt one and the ſame even countenance with thankſgiving, both in proſperity and adverſity, weighing all in an equal balance.

If, when inward comfort is withdrawn from thee, thou prepareſt thy heart to ſuffer greater things; and doſt not juſtify thyſelf, as tho' thou oughteſt not to ſuffer theſe ſo great afflictions, but juſtifieſt me in whatſoever I appoint, and and praiſeſt my holy name; then thou walkeſt in the true and right way of peace.

And if thou attaineſt to the full contempt of thyſelf, then ſhalt thou enjoy abundance of peace.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the excellent liberty which humble prayer ſooner gaineth than reading.

Chriſtian. LORD, it is the work of a perfect man, never to ſlacken his mind from the attentive thought of heavenly things, and to paſs without care among many cares; not like a dull ſluggard; but by a free mind, adhering to no creature with inordinate affection.

2. I beſeech thee, my moſt gracious God, preſerve

ſerve me from the cares of this life, leſt I be entangled thereby; and from the many neceſſities of the body, leſt I ſhould be caught by pleaſure; and from whatſoever is an obſtacle to the ſoul, leſt broken with troubles I ſhould be overthrown.

3. O my God, who art ineffable ſweetneſs, embitter unto me all carnal comfort, which draws me away from the love of eternal things, by the hope of preſent delight.

Let me not be overcome, O Lord, let me not be overcome by fleſh and blood. Let not the world, and the ſhort glory thereof deceive me. Let not the devil and his ſubtilty ſupplant me.

* Give me ſtrength to reſiſt, patience to ſuffer, and conſtancy, to perſevere.

Give me, inſtead of the comforts of the world, the unction of thy Spirit; and for carnal love pour into my ſoul the love of thy name.

Herein, I beſeech thee, let thy hand govern me, and teach me, that I may fall into no extreme.

CHAP. XXII.

That ſelf-love moſt hindereth our attainment of the ſupreme love.

Chriſt. SON, thou oughteſt to give all for all, and to retain nothing of thyſelf.

Know,

Know, that the love of thyſelf doth hurt thee more than any thing in the world.

According to the love and affection thou beareſt to it, every thing cleaves unto thee more or leſs.

If thy love be pure, thou ſhalt not be in bondage to any thing.

Covet not that which thou mayſt not have. Be not willing to have that which may deprive thee of inward liberty.

It is ſtrange that thou committeſt not thyſelf wholly unto me, from the bottom of thy heart, with all things that thou canſt deſire or have.

2. Why doſt thou conſume thyſelf with vain grief? Why art thou tired with needleſs cares?

Stand to my will, and thou ſhalt ſuffer no detriment.

* If thou ſeekeſt this or that, and wouldeſt be here or there, to enjoy thy own will and pleaſure; thou ſhalt never be at quiet, nor free from care:

* For in every thing ſomewhat will be wanting, and in every place there will be ſome that will croſs thee.

3. It availeth thee therefore not to multiply outward things, but to deſpiſe them, and utterly root them out of thy heart.

Unleſs thou ſtandeſt ſtedfaſt in me, thou mayſt change, but not better thyſelf.

For when occaſion of change happens, and is embraced, thou ſhalt find not only thoſe things which

which thou foughteſt to fly, but a great deal more.

4. *Chriſtian.* Strengthen me, O God, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit.

Give me to be ſtrengthened in my inward man, and to empty my heart of all uncomfortable care.

* Not to be drawn away with the deſire of any thing, either mean or precious; but to look upon all things as paſſing away, and myſelf as paſſing away together with them.

5. Grant me, O Lord, heavenly wiſdom, that I may learn above all things to ſeek and find thee, above all things to reliſh thee, and to love thee.

And to think of all other things as they are, according to the diſpoſal of thy wiſdom.

CHAP. XXIII.

How we ought to call upon God, and bleſs him in tribulation.

Chriſtian. BLeſſed, O Lord, be thy name for ever, who art pleaſed that this temptation and tribulation ſhould come upon me.

I cannot fly it; but muſt needs fly to thee, that thou mayſt help me, and turn it to my good.

Lord, I am now afflicted. I am much troubled with this preſent ſuffering.

And

And now, dear Father, what ſhall I ſay? I am in a ſtrait, ſave me from this hour.

Yet therefore came I unto this hour, that thou mayſt be glorified, when I ſhall have been brought very low, and then delivered by thee.

Let it pleaſe thee, Lord, to deliver me; for, what can I do, and whither ſhall I go without thee?

Grant me patience, Lord, at this time alſo.

Help me, my God, and then I will not fear, how grievouſly ſoever I be afflicted.

2. And now, in theſe my troubles, what ſhall I ſay? Lord, thy will be done, I have deſerved to be afflicted.

Surely I ought to bear it; and O that I could bear it with patience, until the tempeſt be paſſed over!

But thy hand is able to take even this temptation from me, and to aſſuage the violence thereof, that I utterly ſink not under it, as often heretofore thou haſt done unto me, O my God, my merciful God.

And the more hard it is to me, the more eaſy is this change to the right hand of the Moſt High.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of craving the divine aid, and confidence of recovering grace.

Chriſt. SON, I am the Lord, that giveth ſtrength in the day of tribulation.

Come

Come unto me when it is not well with thee.

This is that which moſt of all hindereth heavenly conſolation, that thou art ſlow in turning thyſelf unto prayer.

For before thou doſt earneſtly pray unto me, thou ſeekeſt many comforts, and trieſt to refreſh thyſelf with outward things.

And hence it comes to paſs that all doth little profit thee, until thou conſidereſt, that I am he that delivers thoſe that truſt in me; that out of me is neither powerful help, nor profitable counſel, nor laſting remedy.

But now having recovered breath after the tempeſt, gather ſtrength again in the light of my mercies, for I am at hand to repair all, not only entirely, but alſo abundantly.

2. Is there any thing hard to me? Or am I like unto him that promiſeth and performeth not?

Where is thy faith? Be firm and conſtant.

Take courage and be patient; comfort will come to thee in due time.

Wait, wait for me, I will come and heal thee.

Let not thy heart be troubled, neither let it fear.

Believe in me, and put thy truſt in my mercy.

When thou thinkeſt thyſelf fartheſt off from me, often I am neareſt unto thee.

When thou judgeſt, almoſt all is loſt, then often is the greateſt opportunity of improvement.

That

That which I have given I can take away; and reſtore it again when I pleaſe.

* 3. When I give it, it is mine; when I withdraw it, I take not any thing that is thine; for mine is every good and perfect gift.

If I ſend any croſs, repine not, nor let thy heart fail: I can quickly ſuccour thee, and turn all thy heavineſs into joy.

Nevertheleſs I am righteous, and greatly to be praiſed, when I deal thus with thee.

As my Father hath loved me, I alſo love you, ſaid I unto my beloved diſciples; whom I ſent not to temporal joys, but to great conflicts: not to honours, but to contempts; not to idleneſs, but to labours; not to reſt, but to bring forth much fruit with patience.

My ſon, remember theſe words.

CHAP. XXV.

Of the contempt of all creatures, in order to find out the Creator.

* *Chriſtian.* LORD, I ſtand in need of greater grace, to attain that ſtate wherein no man or creature may be a hindrance to me.

For as long as any thing detains me, I cannot freely take my flight unto thee.

What is more quiet than a ſingle eye? And what

what more free than he that desireth nothing upon earth?

And unless a man be free from the affections of all creatures, he cannot freely attend unto divine things.

Long shall he be little, and lie groveling below, that esteemeth any thing great, but the one infinite and eternal good.

For whatsoever is not God, is nothing, and ought to be accounted as nothing.

Christ. Son, thou canst not possess perfect liberty, unless thou wholly renounce thyself.

All who are lovers of themselves are in bondage, full of desires, curious wanderers, seeking self-indulgence. and not the things of Jesus Christ, but often devising and framing that which shall not stand.

For all that is not of God shall perish.

*Keep this short and perfect saying, Forsake all, and thou shalt find all; leave desire, and thou shalt find rest.

Consider this well, and when thou hast fulfilled it, thou shalt understand all things.

2. *Christian.* Lord, that is not one day's work; yea, in this short word is contained all perfection.

Christ. Son, thou must not go back, nor straitways be dejected, when thou heareſt of the ways of the perfect; but rather be stirred up to higher things, and at least desire and sigh after them.

I would thou wert come to this, that thou wert

no

no longer a lover of thyſelf, but didſt ſtand merely at my beck.

Then thou wouldſt pleaſe me, and all thy life would paſs away in joy and peace.

Thou haſt yet many things to forſake; which, unleſs thou wholly reſigneſt up unto me, thou ſhalt not attain that which thou deſireſt.

I counſel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayſt be rich: that is, heavenly wiſdom, which treadeth under foot all earthly things.

Caſt away earthly wiſdom, and all ſtudy to pleaſe others or thyſelf.

He that is wiſe, and well inſtructed in ſpirit, ſtandeth faſt, not heeding any thing, but that the whole intention of his mind may tend to the right end.

For thus he may continue one, and the ſelf-ſame, and unſhaken in the midſt of ſo many various events, directing continually the ſingle eye of his intention unto me.

3. And the purer the eye of the intention is, the more ſteadily doth he paſs through various ſtorms.

But in many things the eye of a pure intention waxeth dim, for it quickly looketh upon any delightſome object that occurs.

And it is rare to find one that is wholly free from all blemiſh of ſelf-ſeeking.

So the Jews of old came to Bethany to Martha

tha and Mary, not for Jesus alone, but to see Lazarus also.

The eye of thy intention therefore is to be purged, that it may be single and right, directed unto me beyond the manifold earthly objects that come between.

CHAP. XXVI.

That God is sweet above all things, and in all things, to him that loveth.

Christian. MY God and my all. What would I have more, and what greater happiness can I desire?

O sweet and pleasing word! But to him that loveth the word; not the world, nor those things that are in the world.

My God and my all! Enough is said to him that understandeth; and to him that loveth it is pleasant to repeat it often.

For when thou art present, all things please; but when thou art absent, all things disgust.

Thou givest quiet of heart, and much peace, and pleasant joy.

Thou makest us think well of all things, and praise thee in all things: neither can any thing please long without thee.

* But

* But that any thing may be pleaſant, thy grace muſt be preſent, and it muſt be ſeaſoned with the ſweetneſs of thy wiſdom.

2. What is not taſteful unto him who taſteth thee?

And him who delighteth not in thee, what can delight?

* 3. O thou everlaſting light, ſurpaſſing all created lights, dart the beams of thy brightneſs from above, piercing the moſt inward parts of my heart.

Purify, rejoice, enlighten, and enliven my ſpirit, with all the powers thereof; that I may cleave unto thee with abundance of joy and triumph.

* O when will that bleſſed hour come, when I ſhall be filled with thy preſence, and thou be unto me all in all!

As long as this is not granted me, I ſhall not have full joy.

Alas! the kingdom of my ſoul is not yet in peace.

4. But thou that ruleſt the raging of the ſea, and ſtilleſt the waves thereof when they ariſe, ariſe and help me:

Scatter the people that delight in war, deſtroy them in thy might.

Diſplay thy greatneſs, and let thy right hand be glorified; for there is no other hope nor refuge for me, but in thee, my Lord God.

CHAP.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of a pure and entire reſignation of ourſelves, for the obtaining freedom of heart.

Chriſt. SON, forſake thyſelf, and thou ſhalt find me.

Stand without chuſing any thing and without ſeeking to have any thing as thy own.

Reſign thyſelf, without reſuming thy claim.

Chriſtian. Lord, how often ſhall I reſign myſelf? And wherein ſhall I forſake myſelf?

* *Chriſt.* Always and every hour, as well in little things as in great; I except nothing, but require that thou be naked and void of all things.

Otherwiſe how canſt thou be mine, and I thine, unleſs both within and without thou art free from all ſelf-will?

2. Some reſign themſelves, but with ſome exception; for they put not their whole truſt in God, and therefore they ſtudy how to provide for themſelves.

* Some alſo at firſt offer all; but afterwards being aſſaulted with temptation, return again to that which they had left, and therefore they go not forward in virtue.

Theſe ſhall not attain to the true liberty of purity of heart, nor to the favour of my ſweeteſt familia-

rity, unleſs they firſt make an entire reſignation, and a daily oblation of themſelves unto me.

3. I have often ſaid unto thee, and now again I ſay the ſame; forſake thyſelf, reſign thyſelf, and thou ſhalt enjoy much inward peace.

* Give all for all; ſeek nothing, require back nothing, abide purely and with a firm confidence in me, and then thou ſhalt enjoy me.

* Thou ſhalt be free in heart, and darkneſs ſhall not have any power over thee.

* Let this be thy prayer, let this be thy deſire; that being ſtript of all ſelfiſhneſs, thou mayſt follow naked the naked Jeſus, and dying to thyſelf, mayſt live eternally with me.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the good government of ourſelves in outward things, and of recourſe to God in danger.

Chriſt. SON, thou oughteſt with all diligence to endeavour, that in every place and action of buſineſs, thou be inwardly free, and maſter of thyſelf, and that things be under thee, and not thou under them.

That thou mayſt be lord of thy actions, not a ſervant or a hireling, but rather a freeman, and a true Hebrew, enjoying the liberty of the ſons of God:

Who ſtand above the things that are preſent, and view the things which are eternal:

* Who

* Who look on tranſitory things with the left eye, and with the right behold the things of heaven:

Whom temporal things cannot draw to cleave unto them; but they rather draw temporal things to ſerve them, in ſuch a way as they are appointed by the Creator of all, who hath left nothing in his creatures without due order.

2. If thou remaineſt ſtedfaſt in all events, and doſt not weigh by the outward appearance, the things which thou ſeeſt and heareſt; but preſently in every affair doſt enter with *Moſes* into the tabernacle, to aſk counſel of the Lord, thou ſhalt hear the divine oracle, and return inſtructed, concerning many things both preſent and to come.

Always fly to the cloſet of thy heart, earneſtly craving the Divine favour.

For the ſcripture teſtifieth, that therefore were *Joſhua* and the children of *Iſrael* deceived by the *Gibeonites*, becauſe they aſked not counſel at the mouth of the Lord.

Always commit thy cauſe to me, I will diſpoſe well of it in due time.

Wait for my ordering of it, and thou ſhalt find it well for thy good.

Chriſtian. Lord, I moſt willingly commit all unto thee, for my care can avail little.

* O that I cleaved not too much to future events, but offered myſelf with all readineſs of mind to thy good pleaſure!

3. *Chriſt.* Son, a man often earneſtly labours for what he deſireth; and when he hath gotten it, he beginneth to be of another mind.

For men's affections do not long continue fixed on one thing.

It is therefore no ſmall thing for a man to forſake himſelf, even in the ſmalleſt things.

4. The true profiting of a man conſiſteth in the denying of himſelf.

But the old enemy ceaſeth at no time from tempting, but day and night layeth grievous ſnares, if haply he may caſt the unwary into them.

Therefore watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation.

CHAP. XXIX.

That man hath no good of himſelf, nor any thing whereof he can glory.

Chriſtian. LORD, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the ſon of man that thou viſiteſt him?

What hath man deſerved, that thou ſhouldſt give him thy grace?

Lord, what cauſe have I to complain, if thou forſakeſt me; or if thou doſt not that which I deſire?

Surely, Lord, I am nothing, I can do nothing, I have

I have nothing that is good of myſelf, but in all things I am defective, and do ever tend to nothing.

And unleſs thou help and inwardly inſtruct me, I become altogether cold and diſſipated.

2. But thou, O Lord, art always the ſame, and endureſt for ever; always good, juſt, and holy, doing all things well, juſtly and holily, and diſpoſing all things with wiſdom.

But I, that am more ready to go backward than forward, do not ever continue in one eſtate; for ſeven times are paſſed over me:

Yet it is ſoon better with me, when it ſo pleaſeth thee, and when thou vouchſafeſt to ſtretch forth thy helping hand.

For thou alone canſt help me without the aid of man, and ſo ſtrengthen me, that my countenance ſhall be no more changed, but my heart ſhall be turned to thee alone, and there ſhall reſt.

3. Thanks be unto thee, from whence all proceedeth, as often as it goeth well with me:

But I am mere vanity in thy ſight, an inconſtant and weak man.

Wherefore then can I glory? Or for what do I deſire to be eſteemed?

For nothing? But this is moſt vain?

The true glory and holy rejoicing is for a man to glory in thee, and not in himſelf:

To rejoice in thy name and not in his own

virtue; nor to delight in any creature but in thee.

Praiſed be thy name, not mine: magnified be thy work, not mine.

Let thy holy name be bleſſed; but to me let no part of men's praiſe be given.

Thou art my glory, thou art the joy of my heart.

In thee will I glory and rejoice all the day; but as for myſelf I will not glory, but in my infirmities.

4. Let the *Jews* ſeek honour one of another; I will deſire that which is from God only.

For all human glory, all temporal honour, all worldly highneſs is vanity and folly.

O my truth, my mercy, my God, moſt bleſſed Trinity; to thee alone be praiſe, honour, power, and glory for evermore.

CHAP. XXX.

That our peace is not to be placed in men.

Chriſt. SON, if thou placeſt thy peace in any one, becauſe he thinketh like thee, and liveth with thee, thou ſhalt be unſtable and entangled,

But if thou haſt recourſe unto the ever-living and eternal truth, a friend going from thee or dying ſhall not grieve thee.

* The

* The love of thy friend ought to be grounded in me; and for me he is to be beloved, whosoever he be who is dear to thee in this life.

No friendship can avail, or continue without me; neither is that love true and pure, which is not knit by me.

Thou oughtest to be so dead to such affections toward men, that thou shouldst wish to be without all friendship purely human.

2. But he that attributeth any good unto himself, hindereth God's grace from coming unto him.

For the grace of the Holy Ghost ever seeketh an humble heart.

When thou castest thine eyes on creatures, the sight of thy Creator is taken from thee.

Learn to overcome thyself in all things for the love of thy Creator; and then thou shalt be able to attain to divine knowledge.

How little soever the thing be, if it be loved and regarded inordinately, it defileth the soul, and hindereth the enjoyment of the supreme good.

CHAP. XXXI.

Against vain knowledge.

Christ. SON, let not the fair speeches and subtle sayings of men move thee: for the

kingdom of God consisteth not in word but in power.

Labour to mortify thy sins; for that will profit thee more than the knowledge of many difficult questions.

2. When thou hast read and knowest many things, thou must ever return to one principle.

* I am he that teacheth man knowledge, and giveth unto babes a more clear understanding than can be taught by man.

He to whom I speak, shall quickly be wise, and he shall profit much in the spirit.

Woe be to them that enquire many curious things of men; and little mind the way how to serve me.

* The time will come, when the Master of Masters shall appear, Christ the Lord of angels, to hear the lesson of all, that is, to examine the conscience of every one.

And then he will search *Jerusalem* with a candle, and the hidden things of darkness shall be laid open, and the arguing of men's tongues shall be silent.

* 3. I am he that teacheth without the noise of words, without the confusion of opinions.

I am he that teacheth to despise earthly things, to disdain things present, to seek the everlasting, to relish things eternal, to fly honours, to suffer injuries, to place all hope in me, to desire nothing out of me, and above all things ardently to love me.

I am

I am the teacher of truth, the ſearcher of the heart, the diſcerner of the thoughts, the promoter of good actions, diſtributing to every one as I judge meet.

CHAP. XXXII.

Of putting our truſt in God when we are evil ſpoken of.

Chriſt. SON, ſtand firm, and put thy truſt in me: for what are words but words? They fly through the air, but hurt not a ſtone.

If thou be guilty, ſee that thou be willing to amend: if thou be innocent, ſuffer this willingly for God.

It is but a ſmall matter to ſuffer a few words, if thou haſt not yet the courage to endure hard ſtripes.

Give diligent ear to my words, and thou ſhalt little regard ten thouſand words ſpoken by men.

" 2. *Chriſtian.* O Lord God, thou juſt judge, ſtrong and patient, thou who knoweſt the frailty and wickedneſs of man, be thou my ſtrength, and my whole truſt, for my own conſcience ſufficeth me not.

Thou knoweſt that which I know not, and therefore in every reproof, I ought to have humbled myſelf, and to have borne meekly.

Vouchſafe mercifully to pardon me as often as I have failed herein, and give me grace to bear it better hereafter.

For thy abundant mercy is more available to me for the obtaining of pardon, than my fancied juſtice for my defence, ſince I cannot ſee to the bottom of my conſcience.

Although I know nothing by myſelf, yet I cannot hereby juſtify myſelf: for without thy mercy no man living ſhall be juſtified in thy ſight.

CHAP. XXXIII.

Of eternity, and the ſhortneſs of this life.

Chriſtian. O MOST bleſſed manſion of the heavenly city! O moſt clear day of eternity, which night obſcureth not, but the higheſt truth ever enlighteneth!

A day of continual joy, of perpetual quietneſs, and never changing into a contrary ſtate!

O that that day would once appear, and all theſe temporal things were at an end!

To the ſaints above it ſhineth with everlaſting brightneſs; but to thoſe that are pilgrims upon earth, it appeareth only afar off, and through a glaſs.

O good Jeſus, when ſhall I ſtand to behold thee!

thee! When ſhall I contemplate the glory of thy kingdom! When wilt thou be unto me all in all!

O when ſhall I be with thee in thy kingdom, which thou haſt prepared for thy beloved from all eternity!

2. Comfort my baniſhment, aſſuage my ſorrow; for my whole deſire ſigheth after thee.

My God, be not far from me, depart not in thy wrath from thy ſervant.

Caſt forth thy lightning and diſperſe them; ſhoot out thine arrows, and conſume all the imaginations of the enemy.

Gather in, call home my ſenſes unto thee, make me forget all the things of this world:

Grant me to caſt away ſpeedily the imaginations of wickedneſs.

* Succour me, O thou, the everlaſting truth, that no vanity may move me.

* Come, heavenly ſweetneſs, and let all impurity fly from thee.

Pardon me as often as I think upon any thing beſides thee in prayer.

I truly confeſs, that I am wont to be ſubject to many diſtractions.

For oftentimes I am not there, where I ſtand or ſit; but I am rather there whither my thoughts carry me.

Where my thoughts are, there am I; there are often my thoughts where my actions are.

But bleſſed is that man, that for thee, O Lord,

diſmiſſeth all creatures, violently reſiſteth nature, and through fervour of ſpirit, crucifieth the luſts of the fleſh: that ſo with a ſerene conſcience he may offer pure prayer unto thee, and be meet to be admitted into the angelical choirs, all earthly things both outwardly and inwardly being excluded.

CHAP. XXXIV.

Of the deſire of everlaſting life, and how great rewards are promiſed to thoſe who fight valiantly.

Chriſt. SON, when thou perceiveſt the deſire of everlaſting bliſs given thee from above, open thy heart wide, and receive this holy inſpiration with thy whole ſoul.

Give moſt ardent thanks to the heavenly goodneſs, that dealeth with thee ſo favourably, viſiteth thee mercifully, ſtirreth thee up fervently, ſuſtaineth thee powerfully, leſt through thine own weight thou fall down to the things of earth.

Neither doſt thou obtain this by thine own thought or endeavour, but by the mere condeſcenſion of heavenly grace:

To the end that thou mayſt make a farther progreſs in holineſs and humility, and prepare thyſelf for future battles:

And

And that thou mayſt cleave unto me with the whole affection of thy heart, and ſerve me with fervent deſire.

2. Aſk not that which is delightful and profitable unto thee, but that which is acceptable to me, and for my honour.

For if thou judgeſt aright, thou oughteſt to prefer and follow my appointment, rather than thine own deſire.

I know thy deſire, and have heard thy frequent groans.

Thou wouldſt now enjoy the everlaſting habitation; and thy heavenly country, repleniſhed with all joy, now delights thee.

But that hour is not yet come; as yet there is another time, a time of war, a time of labour and trial.

Thou deſireſt to be filled with the ſupreme good, but thou canſt not attain it for the preſent.

I am the ſupreme good: patiently wait for me, until the kingdom of God come.

3. Now therefore be humbly obedient unto all, and regard not who ſaid or commanded this:

But take great heed, that whether thy ſuperior, inferior, or thine equal, require any thing of thee, or inſinuate their deſire, thou take it all in good part, and endeavour to fulfil it with a ſincere will.

Let one ſeek this, another that; let him glory

in

in this, the other in that, and be praiſed a thouſand times; but do thou neither rejoice in this, nor in that, but in the contempt of thyſelf, and in my good pleaſure and honour alone.

This art thou to wiſh, that whether it be by thy life or by thy death, God may be always glorified in thee.

CHAP. XXXV.

How a perſon in heavineſs ought to give up himſelf into the hands of God.

Chriſtian. LORD God, holy Father, be thou bleſſed both now and for evermore; becauſe as thou willeſt, ſo it is done, and what thou doſt is good.

Let thy ſervant rejoice in thee; not in himſelf, nor in any thing elſe; for thou alone art the true gladneſs, thou art my hope and my crown, thou art my joy and my honour, O Lord.

What hath thy ſervant, but what he hath received from thee, even without any merit of his?

Thine is all that thou haſt given, and whatſoever thou haſt made.

I am poor, and in labour from my youth: and ſometimes my ſoul is ſorrowful even unto tears; ſome-

ſometimes alſo it is troubled, by reaſon of the evils which hang over my head.

2. I long after the joy of peace, I earneſtly crave the peace of thy children, that are led by thee in the light of thy comfort.

If thou giveſt peace, if thou poureſt into my heart holy joy; the ſoul of thy ſervant ſhall be full of gladneſs, and ſhall become devout in thy praiſe:

But if thou withdraweſt thyſelf, he will not be able to run the way of thy commandments, but rather he will bow his knees, and ſmite his breaſt, for it is not with him as it was heretofore, when thy candle ſhone upon his head, and he was protected under the ſhadow of thy wings, from the temptations which violently aſſaulted him.

* O righteous Father, and ever to be praiſed, the hour is come that thy ſervant is to be tried.

Behold, dear Father, meet it is that in this hour thy ſervant ſuffer ſomething for thy ſake.

O Father, ever more be honoured, the hour is come; that for a ſhort time thy ſervant ſhould outwardly be oppreſſed, but inwardly live with thee.

That he ſhould be a little deſpiſed, humbled, and made abject in the ſight of men, and worn down with heavineſs; that he may riſe again with the morning of the new light, and be glorified in heaven.

Holy

Holy Father, thou haſt ſo appointed it; and this is fulfilled which thyſelf haſt commanded.

3. It is a favour to thy friend, that he may ſuffer and be afflicted in the world for the love of thee, how often ſoever, and by whomſoever, thou permitteſt it to fall upon him.

Nothing cometh to paſs on earth without thy counſel, without thy providence, or without a cauſe.

It is good for me, Lord, that thou haſt afflicted me, that I may learn thy righteous judgment, and caſt away all haughtineſs of heart, and preſumption.

* It is profitable to me, that ſhame hath covered my face, that I may rather ſeek to thee for comfort than to men.

4. I have learned alſo here to dread thy unſearchable judgments, who afflicteſt the juſt with the wicked, but not without equity and juſtice.

I give thee thanks, for that thou haſt not ſpared my ſins, but haſt worn me away, inflicting ſorrows, and ſending griefs within and without.

There is none under heaven that can comfort me, but thou my Lord God, the heavenly phyſician of ſouls, that ſtrikeſt and healeſt, bringeſt down to hell, and bringeſt back again.

Let thy correction be upon me, and let thy rod inſtruct me.

5. Behold, dear Father, I am in thy hands, I bow myſelf under the rod of thy correction:

Strike

Strike my back and my neck, that my perverſeneſs may be conformed to thy will.

Make me an holy and humble diſciple of thine (as thou art wont to do) that I may be ready at every beck of thy pleaſure.

I commend myſelf and all that is mine unto thee to be corrected.

It is better to be corrected here than hereafter.

Thou knoweſt every thing, and there is nothing in the conſcience of man hidden from thee.

Before things are done, thou knoweſt that they will come to paſs, and haſt no need that any ſhould teach thee, or admoniſh thee of thoſe things which are done on earth.

Thou knoweſt what is expedient for my profiting, and how fit tribulation is to ſcour off the ruſt of my ſins.

Do with me according to thy good pleaſure, and diſdain me not for my ſinful life; better and more clearly known to none than to thee alone.

6. Grant me, O Lord, to know that which ought to be known, to love that which ought to be loved;

To praiſe that which pleaſeth thee moſt, to eſteem that which is precious unto thee, to deſpiſe that which is contemptible in thy ſight.

Suffer me not to judge according to the ſight of the outward eyes, nor to give ſentence according to the hearing of the ears of ignorant men.

But to diſcern inviſible and ſpiritual things with

with a true judgment, and, above all things, ever to ſearch after thy good will and pleaſure.

CHAP. XXXVI.

That a man ought to eſteem himſelf not worthy of any comfort.

Chriſtian. LORD, I am not worthy of any comfort nor of any ſpiritual viſitation.

And therefore thou dealeſt juſtly with me, when thou leaveſt me poor and deſolate.

For though I could ſhed a ſea of tears, yet I were not worthy of thy comfort.

For, alas, I deſerve nothing but to be puniſhed, in that I have grievouſly offended thee in many things.

But thou, O merciful God, who willeſt not that any ſhould periſh, to ſhew the riches of thy goodneſs, vouchſafeſt to comfort thy ſervant above the manner of men:

For thy comforts are not like the words of men.

2. What have I done, O Lord that thou ſhouldeſt beſtow any heavenly comforts upon me?

I remember not that I have done any good, but have been always prone to ſin, and ſlow to amendment.

This

This is true, and I cannot deny it: if I ſhould ſay otherwiſe, thou wouldſt ſtand againſt me, and there would be none to defend me.

What have I deſerved but hell and everlaſting fire?

I confeſs in very truth, that I am worthy of all ſcorn and contempt, and it is not fit that I ſhould be numbered among thy ſaints.

3. What ſhall I ſay, guilty as I am, and full of all confuſion?

I have nothing to ſay but this; I have ſinned, Lord, I have ſinned; have mercy on me, pardon me;

*Suffer me a little, that I may vent my grief, before I go into the land of darkneſs, a land covered with the ſhadow of death.

What doſt thou require of a guilty and miſerable ſinner, but that he humble himſelf for his offences?

Of true contrition and humbling of the heart, ariſeth hope of forgiveneſs; the troubled conſcience is reconciled to God; the favour of God which was loſt, is recovered; man is preſerved from the wrath to come, and God and the penitent ſoul meet together with an holy kiſs.

4. Humble contrition for ſin is an acceptable ſacrifice unto thee, O Lord, ſavouring much ſweeter in thy preſence than the perfume of frankincenſe.

This

This is alſo the pleaſant ointment which thou wouldſt ſhould be poured upon thy ſacred feet.

For thou never deſpiſeſt a contrite heart.

CHAP. XXXVII.

Of the different motions of nature and grace.

Chriſt. SON, mark diligently the motions of nature and grace, for they move in a very ſubtle manner, and cannot be diſcerned but by him that is ſpiritually enlightened.

All men pretend ſome good in their words and deeds; and therefore under the ſhew of good many are deceived.

Nature is crafty, and ſeduceth, entangleth, and deceiveth many, and always propoſeth herſelf for her end:

But grace walketh in ſimplicity, uſeth no deceit, and doth all things purely for God's ſake, in whom alſo ſhe finally reſteth.

2. Nature will not willingly die, nor be kept down, nor be overcome, nor be ſubject to any:

But grace ſtudieth mortification, reſiſteth ſenſuality, ſeeketh to be ſubject, is willing to be kept under, and will not uſe her own liberty.

She loveth to be kept under diſcipline, and deſireth not to rule any, but always to live and remain wholly ſubject to God; and for God, is ready humbly to obey all men.

Nature ſtriveth for her own advantage, and conſidereth

considereth what profit she may reap by another;

But grace considereth not what is profitable unto herself, but what is profitable to many.

Nature willingly receiveth honour and respect.

But grace faithfully attributeth all honour and glory unto God.

3. Nature feareth shame and contempt;

But grace rejoiceth to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus.

Nature loveth ease and bodily rest;

But grace cannot be idle, but willingly embraceth labour.

Nature seeketh to have those things that are beautiful, and abhorreth that which is mean or coarse;

But grace delighteth in plain and humble things, and despiseth not rough things, that are old and mean.

Nature respecteth temporal things, rejoiceth at earthly gain, sorroweth for loss, is moved with every little injurious word;

But grace thinketh on that which is everlasting, and cleaveth not to temporal things; she is not troubled at losses, nor disquieted with hard words; because she hath placed her treasure and joy in heaven, where nothing perisheth.

4. Nature is covetous, and doth more willingly receive than give; she loveth her own things;

But grace is bountiful to all, shunneth private interest, is content with a little, thinketh it more blessed to give than to receive.

Nature

Nature inclines to the creatures, to her own fleſh, to vanities and wanderings;

But grace draweth unto God, and unto goodneſs, renounceth creatures, flieth the world, hateth the deſires of the fleſh, reſtraineth wanderings abroad, bluſheth to be ſeen in public.

Nature is willing to have ſome outward comfort, wherein ſhe may be ſenſibly delighted;

But grace ſeeketh comfort in God alone, and delighteth above all viſible things in the higheſt good.

5. Nature worketh all for her own profit; ſhe can do nothing but for benefit ſhe hopeth to obtain, either that which is equal or better, either praiſe or favour, and coveteth to have her works and gifts much eſteemed:

But grace requireth no other reward than God alone; nor deſireth more of temporals, than may ſerve her for the obtaining of things eternal.

6. Nature rejoiceth to have many friends and kinsfolks; glorieth in noble place and birth; is obſequious to the powerful, fawneth upon the rich, and applaudeth thoſe that are like herſelf;

But grace loveth her enemies, and is not puffed up with multitudes of friends, nor eſteemeth place or birth, but where it is joined with virtue:

She rather favoureth the poor than the rich; hath more tenderneſs for the innocent than the powerful;

powerful; rejoiceth in the true, not in the deceitful:

Always exhorting good men to labour for more excellent gifts; and by goodneſs to reſemble the Son of God.

Nature quickly complaineth of want and trouble; grace with conſtancy endureth need:

Nature coveteth to know ſecrets, and to hear news; ſhe will appear abroad, and make proof of many things by her own ſenſes; ſhe deſireth to be known, and to do thoſe things for which ſhe may be praiſed and admired:

But grace careth not for hearing curious matters;

She teacheth to reſtrain the ſenſes, to avoid vanity and oſtentation; and in every thing and every knowledge to ſeek the praiſe and honour of God.

She will not have praiſe, but deſireth that God ſhould be praiſed in his gifts, who of mere love beſtoweth all things.

CHAP XXXVIII.

Of the corruption of nature, and efficacy of Divine grace.

Chriſtian. O Lord, my God, who has created me after thy likeneſs, grant me this grace which thou haſt ſhewed to be ſo neceſ-

ſary

ſary to ſalvation, that I may overcome my wicked nature, which draweth me to ſin and perdition.

For I feel in my fleſh the law of ſin contradicting the law of my mind; neither can I reſiſt, unleſs thy moſt holy grace, infuſed into my heart, aſſiſt me.

2. O Lord, how exceeding needful is thy grace for me to begin any good work, to go forward, and to accompliſh it;

For without it I can do nothing; but in thee I can do all things.

Arts, riches, beauty, ſtrength, wit, eloquence, are of no value with thee, O Lord, without thy grace.

3. O moſt bleſſed grace, that makeſt the poor in ſpirit rich in virtue, and makeſt the rich in many bleſſings, to be humble in heart;

Come, come down unto me, repleniſh me early with thy comfort, leſt my ſoul ſhould faint for wearineſs and dryneſs of mind.

O Lord, thy grace is ſufficient for me, though other things that nature deſireth be wanting.

If I be tempted and vexed with many tribulations, I will not fear any evils, while thy grace is with me:

This is ſtronger than all enemies, and wiſer than all the wiſe.

Let thy grace, O Lord, always prevent me, and

follow

follow me, and make me ever diligent in good works, through Jesus Christ thy Son. *Amen.*

CHAP. XXXIX.

That we ought to deny ourselves and imitate Christ.

Christ. FOLLOW Me, I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

I am the way, which thou oughtest to follow; the truth which thou oughtest to trust; the life which thou oughtest to hope for.

I am the strait way, the supreme truth, the true life: yea, the blessed life, the uncreated life.

If thou remainest in my way, thou shalt know the truth, and the truth shall make thee free, and thou shalt lay hold on everlasting life.

2. *Christian.* Lord Jesus, forasmuch as thy life was poor and contemptible unto the world, grant me grace to imitate thee in suffering worldly contempt.

For the servant is not greater than his Lord, nor the disciple above his Master.

Let thy servant be exercised in thy life, for therein my salvation consists.

Whatsoever I read or heard besides it, doth not refresh or delight me fully.

3. *Christ.* Son, now thou knowest these things, happy shalt thou be if thou do them.

He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me;

And I will love him, and will manifeſt myſelf unto him, and make him ſit with me in the kingdom of my Father.

Chriſtian. Lord Jeſus, as thou haſt ſaid and promiſed, ſo let it come to paſs.

I have received the croſs, I have received it from thy hand; I will bear it, and bear it till death, as thou haſt laid it upon me.

Truly the life of a Chriſtian is the croſs; but yet it is a guide to paradiſe.

I have begun, I may not go back, neither is it fit to leave that which I have undertaken.

Behold, our King goeth before us, who alſo will fight for us.

Let us follow him manfully, let none be diſmayed, but be ready to die valiantly in the battle, and let us not blemiſh our glory by flying from the croſs.

CHAP. XL.

That a man be not too much dejected when he feeleth ſome defect.

Chriſt. SON, patience and humility in adverſity are more pleaſing to me, than much devotion in proſperity.

Why

Why art thou grieved for every little trifle ſpoken againſt thee?

Although it had been much more, thou oughteſt not to have been moved.

But now let it paſs; it is not the firſt that hath happened, nor is it any new thing, neither ſhall it be the laſt.

Thou art valiant enough, as long as no adverſity happeneth.

Thou canſt give good counſel, and ſtrengthen others with thy words; but when tribulation cometh to thy door, thou art deſtitute of counſel and ſtrength.

I yet live, ſaith the Lord, ready to help thee, and to give thee greater comfort than before, if thou putteſt thy truſt in me, and calleſt devoutly upon me.

2. Be patient, and prepare thyſelf to greater ſufferings.

All is not loſt, if thou feeleſt thyſelf afflicted, or grievouſly tempted.

I am he, who will ſtrengthen with health them that mourn, and raiſe up unto glory thoſe that know their own infirmity.

3. *Chriſtian.* Lord, bleſſed be thy word, more ſweet unto my mouth than honey, and the honey-comb.

What ſhould I do in tribulations, unleſs thou didſt comfort me with thy holy words?

What matter is it, how much and what I ſuf-

 fer,

fer, so I may at length attain the port of salvation?

Grant me a good end, grant me a happy passage out of this world!

Be mindful of me, O my God, and direct me in the right way to thy kingdom. *Amen.*

CHAP. XLI.

Of searching the secret judgments of God.

Christ. SON, beware thou disputest not of high matters, nor of the secret judgments of God.

Why this man is left, and that man taken into favour; why this is so much afflicted, and that so greatly advanced:

These things are beyond the reach of man; neither can reason search out the judgments of God.

When the enemy therefore suggesteth these things unto thee, answer; thou art just, O Lord, and thy judgments are right.

And again, the judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.

Thy judgments are to be feared, not to be discussed; they are such as cannot be comprehended by the understanding of man.

2. Neither enquire or dispute of the merits of saints, which of them is holier than the other.

3. I

3. I know both the first and the last: I embrace all with inestimable love.

I am to be praised in all my saints; I am to be blessed above all things, and to be honoured in every one.

CHAP. XLII.

That all our hope and trust is to be fixed in God alone.

Christian. LORD, what is my trust in this life? Or what is my greatest comfort of all things under heaven?

Is it thou, my Lord God, whose mercies are without number?

Where hath it been well with me without thee? Or when could it be ill with me, when thou wert present?

I had rather be poor for thee, than rich without thee.

I had rather chuse to be a pilgrim on earth with thee, than to possess heaven without thee.

* Where thou art, there is heaven; and there is death and hell, where thou art not.

Thou art my desire; and therefore I cannot but sigh, and cry, and pray unto thee.

For I have none to trust in, none that can help me in my necessities, but thee alone, my God.

* Thou art my hope, thou art my truſt, thou art my comfort, and moſt faithful unto me in all things.

2. All men ſeek their own; thou only ſeekeſt my ſalvation, and turneſt all things to my good.

Although thou expoſeſt me to divers temptations and adverſities; yet thou ordereſt all this to my advantage, who art wont to try thy beloved a thouſand ways.

In which thou oughteſt no leſs to be loved and praiſed, than if thou didſt fill me with heavenly comforts.

3. In thee therefore, O Lord God, I put my whole hope and refuge:

On thee I reſt in all tribulation and anguiſh.

For I find all to be weak and inconſtant, whatſoever I behold out of thee.

* For neither can my friends avail, nor ſtrong helpers aid, nor wiſe counſellors give any profitable anſwer, nor the books of the learned comfort, nor any wealth deliver, nor any ſecret or pleaſant place defend: if thou thyſelf doſt not aſſiſt, help, ſtrengthen, comfort, inſtruct, and keep us.

4. For all things that ſeem to make for peace, without thee are nothing, and bring indeed no felicity at all.

Thou therefore art the end of all that is good, the height of life, the depth of wiſdom:

* And the ſtrongeſt comfort of thy ſervants is, to truſt in thee above all things.

To thee therefore do I lift up mine eyes; in thee

thee O my God, the Father of mercies, I put my truſt.

* Bleſs and ſanctify my ſoul with thy heavenly bleſſing, that it may be made thy holy habitation, and the ſeat of thy eternal glory:

* And that nothing may be found in the temple of thy glory, that may offend the eyes of thy majeſty.

According to the greatneſs of thy goodneſs, and the multitude of thy mercies, look upon me, and hear the prayer of thy poor ſervant, who is far exiled from thee in the land of the ſhadow of death.

* Protect and keep the ſoul of thy ſervant, amidſt ſo many dangers of this corruptible life, and by thy grace accompanying me, direct it by the way of peace to the country of everlaſting light. *Amen.*

An Extract of the

CHRISTIAN PATTERN:

Or, a treatise on the imitation of Christ. Written in Latin by *Thomas a Kempis*.

BOOK IV.

An Exhortation *unto the* Holy Communion.

The voice of Christ.

COME unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden and I will refresh you.

The bread which I will give is my flesh, for the life of the world.

Take, eat, this in my body that is given for you: do this in remembrance of me.

He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.

The words which I speak unto you are spirit and life.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

With how great reverence Christ ought to be received.

The voice of the disciple.

THESE are thy words, O Christ, the everlasting truth.

Because therefore they are thine, and true, they are all thankfully and faithfully to be received by me.

They are thine, and thou hast spoken them; and they are mine also, because thou hast spoken them for my salvation.

I willingly receive them from thy mouth, that they may be the deeper imprinted in my heart.

These gracious words, so full of sweetness and love, encourage me; but mine own offences drive me back from receiving so great mysteries.

2. Thou commandest me to come confidently unto thee, if I will have part with thee; to receive the food of immortality, if I desire to obtain everlasting glory.

Thou sayest, Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you.

O ſweet and friendly words in the ear of ſinners, that thou, my Lord God, ſhouldſt invite the poor and needy to the participation of thy moſt holy body?

* But who am I, Lord, that I ſhould preſume to approach unto thee?

* Behold, the heaven of heavens cannot contain thee, and thou ſayeſt come ye all unto me!

3. What meaneth this ſo gracious condeſcenſion, this ſo friendly invitation?

How ſhall I dare to come, that know no good in myſelf?

How ſhall I bring thee into my houſe, that have ſo often offended thy moſt gracious countenance?

* The angels and archangels revere thee, and the ſaints and juſt men fear thee, and thou ſayeſt, come ye all unto me.

Unleſs thou, O Lord, didſt ſay it, who would believe it to be true?

And unleſs thou didſt command it, who would dare to come unto thee?

* Behold, Noah, a juſt man, laboured an hundred years in making of the ark, that he might be ſaved with a few; and how can I in one hour prepare myſelf to receive, with reverence the maker of the world?

4. Moſes, thy great ſervant, and thy ſpecial friend, made an ark of incorruptible wood, which

alſo

alſo he covered with moſt pure gold, to put the tables of the law therein; and I a corruptible creature, how ſhall I dare lightly to receive the maker of the law, and the giver of life?

Solomon, the wiſeſt of the kings of Iſrael, beſtowed ſeven years in building a magnificent temple to the praiſe of thy name.

He celebrated the feaſt of the dedication thereof eight days together; he offered a thouſand peace-offerings, and he ſolemnly ſet the ark on the place prepared for it, with the ſound of trumpets and joy.

* And I the moſt miſerable and pooreſt of men, how ſhall I bring thee into my houſe, that can ſcarce ſpend one half hour devoutly? Yea would I could once ſpend near half an hour in a due manner!

5. O my God, how much did they do out of an endeavour to pleaſe thee! And, alas, how little is that which I do! How little time do I ſpend to prepare myſelf to receive!

I am very ſeldom wholly recollected, very ſeldom free from all diſtraction;

And yet ſurely no unbecoming thought ought to appear in the preſence of the Deity, nor any creature find any place in me, for I am not to harbour an angel, but the Lord of angels.

6. And yet there is great difference between the ark of the covenant, and thy moſt pure body! Between thoſe legal ſacrifices, figures of fu-

ture things, and the completion of all antient ſacrifices.

Why therefore am I not more inflamed at thy venerable preſence?

7. The devout King *David* danced before the ark of God with all his might, calling to mind the benefits beſtowed upon his fore-fathers.

He often ſung to the harp, being inſpired with the grace of the Holy Ghoſt.

He taught the people of Iſrael to praiſe God with their whole heart, and with joint voices every day to bleſs and praiſe him.

If ſo great devotion was then ſhewn, and there was ſuch celebrating of the divine praiſe before the ark of the teſtament; what reverence is now to be performed in receiving the moſt precious body and blood of Chriſt?

8. O God, the inviſible creator of the world, how wonderfully doſt thou deal with us!

How ſweetly and graciouſly doſt thou diſpoſe of all things for thine elect, to whom thou offereſt thyſelf to be received in this ſacrament!

This exceedeth all underſtanding! This ſtrongly draweth the hearts of the devout, and inflameth their affections.

9. O the admirable and hidden grace of this ſacrament, which only the faithful ones of Chriſt know: but the unbelieving, and ſuch as are ſlaves unto ſin, cannot experience;

In

In this ſacrament ſpiritual grace is given, and ſtrength which was loſt reſtored in the ſoul, and the beauty disfigured by ſin returns again.

This grace is ſometimes ſo great, that not only the mind, but the weak body alſo, feeleth great increaſe of ſtrength.

10. Our coldneſs and negligence is much to be bewailed, that we are not drawn with greater affection to receive Chriſt, in whom all the hope and merit of thoſe that are to be ſaved conſiſts.

For he is our ſanctification and redemption: he is the comforter of us travellers, and the everlaſting fruition of ſaints.

O the blindneſs and hardneſs of man's heart, that doth not more deeply weigh ſo unſpeakable a gift!

11. If the moſt holy ſacrament was celebrated in one place only, and conſecrated by one only perſon in the world, with how great deſire would men be affected to that place, and to ſuch a prieſt, that they might enjoy theſe divine myſteries!

But now there are many prieſts, and Chriſt is offered in many places; that ſo the grace and love of God to men may appear greater, the more this ſacred communion is ſpread through the world.

Thanks be unto thee gracious Jeſus, the everlaſting ſhepherd, who haſt vouchſafed to refreſh us poor exiles with thy precious body and blood,

and

and to invite us to the receiving of these myſteries with the words of thine own mouth, ſaying, Come unto me all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refreſh you.

CHAP. II.

That the great goodneſs and love of God is exhibited to man in this ſacrament.

The voice of the diſciple.

* IN confidence of thy goodneſs and mercy, I come, O Lord, a ſick man unto my Saviour, hungry and thirſty to the fountain of life, needy to the king of heaven, a ſervant unto my Lord, a creature to my Creator, diſconſolate to thee my merciful comforter.

But whence is this to me, that thou vouchſafeſt to come unto me? Who am I, that thou ſhouldſt give thyſelf unto me?

How dare a ſinner appear before thee? And how is it that thou doſt vouchſafe to come unto a ſinner?

Thou knoweſt thy ſervant, and ſeeſt that he hath no good thing in him, for which thou ſhouldſt beſtow this favour upon him.

I confeſs my unworthineſs; I acknowledge thy goodneſs; I praiſe thy mercy, and give thee thanks for thy tranſcendent love.

For

For thou doſt this for thine own ſake, not for any merits of mine: that thy goodneſs may be better known unto me, thy love more abundantly ſhewn, and thy gracious condeſcenſion the more eminently diſplayed.

Since therefore it is thy pleaſure, and thou haſt commanded that it ſhould be ſo, this thy favour is alſo pleaſing to me, and may my ſins be no hindrance.

2. O moſt ſweet and benign Jeſu, how great reverence and thanks is due unto thee for the receiving of thy ſacred body, whoſe preciouſneſs no man is able to expreſs!

But what ſhall I think, now I am to approach unto my Lord, whom I am not able duly to honour, and yet I deſire to receive him with devotion?

What can I think better and more profitable, than to humble myſelf wholly before thee, and to exalt thine infinite goodneſs over me?

I praiſe thee, my God, and will exalt thee for ever. I deſpiſe and ſubmit myſelf unto thee, in a deep ſenſe of my own unworthineſs.

3. Behold thou art the holy of holies, and I the vileſt of ſinners!

Behold thou inclineſt unto me, who am not worthy ſo much as to look up unto thee.

Behold thou comeſt unto me, it is thy will to be with me, thou inviteſt me to thy banquet.

Thou

Thou wilt give me the food of heaven, and bread of angels to eat, which is no other indeed than thyself, the living bread, that descended from heaven and giveth life unto the world.

4. From whence doth this love proceed! What a gracious condescension appeareth herein! How great thanks and praises are due unto thee for these benefits!

O how good and profitable was thy counsel, when thou ordainedst it! How sweet and pleasant the banquet when thou gavest thyself to be our food!

How wonderful is thy operation, O Lord, how mighty is thy power, how unspeakable is thy truth!

For thou saidst the word, and all things were made; and this was done which thou commandedst.

5. A thing of great admiration, that thou my Lord God, shouldst be exhibited unto us by the elements of bread and wine.

Thou who art the Lord of all things, and standest in need of none, hast pleased to dwell in us by means of this thy sacrament.

* Preserve my heart and body undefiled, that, with a chearful and pure conscience, I may celebrate thy mysteries, and receive them to my everlasting health: which thou hast ordained and instituted for thy honour and for a perpetual memorial.

6. Rejoice

6. Rejoice O my ſoul, and give thanks unto God for ſo excellent a gift, ſo ſingular a comfort left unto me in this vale of tears.

For as often as thou receiveſt, ſo often art thou made partaker of all the merits of Chriſt.

For the love of Chriſt is never diminiſhed, and the greatneſs of his propitiation is never exhauſted.

Therefore thou oughteſt always to weigh with attentive conſideration, this great myſtery of thy ſalvation.

* So great, new, and joyful it ought to ſeem unto thee, when thou comeſt to theſe holy myſteries; as if the ſame day Chriſt firſt deſcending into the womb of the virgin, was become man; or hanging on the croſs, did ſuffer and die for the ſalvation of mankind.

CHAP. III.

That it is profitable to communicate often.

The voice of the diſciple.

* BEHOLD, O Lord, I come unto thee, that I may be comforted by thy gift, and delighted in thy holy banquet, which thou, O God, haſt prepared in thy goodneſs for the poor.

Behold in thee is all I can or ought to deſire; thou art my ſalvation, and my redemption,

my

my hope and my ſtrength, my honour and my glory!

* Make joyful, therefore, this day, the ſoul of thy ſervant, for I have lifted it up unto thee, O Lord Jeſus.

* I deſire to receive thee now with devotion and reverence. I long to bring thee into my houſe; that with *Zaccheus* I may be bleſſed by thee, and numbered among the children of *Abraham.*

My ſoul thirſteth to receive thy body and blood, my heart deſireth to be united with thee.

* 2. Give me thyſelf, and it ſufficeth; for, beſides thee, no comfort is available.

I cannot be without thee, nor live without thy viſitation;

And therefore I muſt often come unto thee, and receive thee for the welfare of my ſoul, leſt haply I faint in the way, if I be deprived of thy heavenly food.

For ſo moſt merciful Jeſu, thou once didſt ſay, preaching to the people, and curing ſundry diſeaſes, I will not ſend them home faſting, leſt they faint in the way.

Deal thou therefore in like manner now with me, who haſt vouchſafed to leave thyſelf in the ſacrament for the comfort of the faithful.

For thou art the ſweet refection of the ſoul; and he that eateth thee worthily, ſhall be partaker of everlaſting glory.

3. O the wonderful condeſcenſion of thy mercy towards us, that thou, O Lord God, the Creator and giver of life to all ſpirits, doſt vouchſafe to come unto a poor ſoul, and with thy whole deity to repleniſh her hunger!

O happy mind and bleſſed ſoul, that receives thee, her Lord God, with devout affection, and in receiving of thee is filled with ſpiritual joy!

O how great a Lord doth ſhe entertain! How beloved a gueſt doth ſhe harbour! How pleaſant a companion doth ſhe receive! How faithful a friend doth ſhe take in! How lovely and glorious a ſpouſe doth ſhe embrace!

She embraceth him, who is to be loved above all that is beloved, and above all things that may be deſired.

* Let heaven and earth, and all the hoſts of them, be ſilent in thy preſence; for what praiſe and beauty ſoever they have, it is received from thy bounty, and cannot equal the beauty of thy name, of whoſe wiſdom there is no number.

CHAP. IV.

That many gifts are beſtowed upon them that communicate devoutly.

The voice of the diſciple.

* MY Lord God, prevent thy ſervant with the bleſſings of thy ſweetneſs, that I may approach

approach worthily and devoutly to thy glorious sacrament.

* Stir up my heart unto thee, and deliver me from a heavy numbneſs of mind.

* Viſit me with thy ſalvation, that I may taſte in ſpirit thy ſweetneſs, which plentifully lieth hid in this ſacrament as in a fountain.

Enlighten alſo my eyes to behold ſo great a myſtery, and ſtrengthen me to believe it with ſteady faith.

For it is thy work, and not man's power; thy ſacred inſtitution, not man's invention.

For no man is of himſelf able to comprehend theſe things, which ſurpaſs the underſtanding even of angels.

What therefore ſhall I, unworthy ſinner, duſt and aſhes, be able to comprehend of ſo high and ſacred a myſtery?

2. O Lord, in the ſimplicity of my heart, at thy commandment I come unto thee, with hope and reverence, and believe thou art preſent in this ſacrament.

Thy will is, that I receive thee, and that by love I unite myſelf unto thee.

* Wherefore I implore thy mercy, and crave thy ſpecial grace, that I may wholly melt and overflow with love unto thee, and hereafter never ſeek any comfort out of thee.

For this ſacrament is the remedy of all ſpiritual weakneſs: hereby my vices are cured, my paſſions bridled, temptations overcome, grace infuſed, virtue

virtue begun increaſed, faith confirmed, hope ſtrengthened, and love inflamed.

3. For thou doſt beſtow many benefits in the ſacrament upon thy beloved ones that communicate devoutly. O my God the protector of my ſoul, the repairer of human frailty, and the giver of inward comfort.

Thou imparteſt unto them much comfort againſt ſundry tribulations.

For who is there, that approaching humbly unto the fountain of ſweetneſs, doth not carry away from thence at leaſt ſome little ſweetneſs?

Or who, ſtanding by a great fire, receiveth not ſome heat thereby?

Thou art a fountain always full and overflowing, a fire ever burning and never decaying.

4. Wherefore, if I cannot draw out of the full fountain itſelf, nor drink my fill; I will, notwithſtanding, ſet my lips to the mouth of this heavenly conduit, that I may draw from thence at leaſt ſome drop to refreſh my thirſt; and not be wholly dried up.

And though I be not altogether heavenly; nor ſo inflamed as the cherubim and ſeraphim; I will endeavour after ſome ſpark of divine fire, by humbly receiving of this enlivening ſacrament.

And whatſoever is wanting in me, O merciful Jeſu, moſt holy Saviour, do thou bountifully and graciouſly ſupply, who haſt vouchſafed to call all

unto

unto thee, Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heaven laden, and I will refresh you.

5. I indeed labour in the sweat of my brow, I am vexed with grief of heart, I am burthened with sin, I am troubled with temptations, I am entangled and oppressed with many evil passions; and there is none to help me, none to deliver and save me, but thou O Lord, my Saviour, to whom I commit myself, and all that is mine, that thou mayst keep me, and bring me to life everlasting.

CHAP. V.

Of the examining our conscience, and purpose of amendment.

The voice of the Beloved.

ABOVE all things, the minister of God ought to come to celebrate and receive this sacrament with great humility of heart, and lowly reverence, and a pious intending the honour of God.

Examine diligently thy conscience; so that there be nothing that may breed in thee remorse of conscience, and hinder thy free access.

And, if thou hast time, confess unto God in the secret of thy heart, all the miseries of thy disordered passions.

Lament

2. Lament and grieve, that thou art yet ſo worldly, ſo unmortified as to thy paſſions;

So unwatchful over thy outward ſenſes, ſo often entangled with vain imaginations;

So negligent and cold in prayer, ſo undevout in celebrating, ſo dry in receiving;

So quickly diſtracted, ſo ſeldom wholly recollected;

So ſuddenly moved to anger, ſo apt to take diſpleaſure againſt another;

So prone to judge, ſo ſevere to reprehend;

* So often purpoſing much good, and yet performing little.

3. Theſe and other thy defects being confeſſed, with full reſignation, and with thy whole will, offer up thyſelf a perpetual ſacrifice to the honour of my name, on the altar of thy heart, faithfully committing thy body and ſoul unto me;

That ſo thou mayſt come worthily to celebrate this ſacrifice, and to receive profitably the ſacrament of my body.

4. For a man hath no other oblation than to offer himſelf unto God in the holy communion.

And whenſoever he ſhall come to Me for pardon and grace, as I live, ſaith the Lord, who willeth not the death of a ſinner, but rather that he be converted and live, I will not remember his ſins any more, but they ſhall all be forgiven him.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of the oblation of Chriſt on the croſs, and reſignation of ourſelves.

The voice of the Beloved.

* AS I willingly offered up myſelf unto God my Father for thy ſins, my hands being ſtretched forth on the croſs, ſo that nothing remained in Me that was not wholly turned into a ſacrifice, for the appeaſing the Divine Majeſty;

So oughteſt thou alſo to offer up thyſelf willingly unto me every day, as a pure and holy oblation, with all thy might and affection, in as hearty a manner as thou canſt.

What do I require of thee more than that thou entirely reſign thyſelf unto me?

Whatſoever thou giveſt beſides thyſelf is of no account in my ſight; for I ſeek not thy gifts but thyſelf.

2. As it would not ſuffice thee to have all things beſides me; ſo neither can it pleaſe me, whatſoever thou giveſt, if thou offereſt not thyſelf.

Offer up thyſelf unto me, and give thyſelf wholly to God, and thy offering ſhall be accepted.

Behold I offered up myſelf wholly unto my Father

Father for thee, that I might be wholly thine, and thou remain mine.

But if thou doſt not offer thyſelf up freely unto my will, thy oblation is not entire, neither will the union between us be perfect.

Therefore a free offering up of thyſelf into the hands of God, ought to go before all thy actions, if thou wilt obtain freedom and grace.

For this cauſe ſo few become inwardly free, becauſe they cannot wholly deny themſelves.

My ſaying is unalterable, unleſs a man forſake all, he cannot be my diſciple.

Therefore, if thou deſireſt to be my diſciple, offer up thyſelf unto me with thy whole affections.

CHAP. VII.

That we ought to offer up ourſelves, and all that is ours unto God, *and to pray for all.*

The voice of the diſciple.

THINE, O Lord, are all things that are in heaven, and in earth.

I deſire to offer up myſelf unto thee, as a free oblation, and to remain always thine.

O Lord, in the ſimplicity of my heart I offer myſelf unto thee this day, for a ſacrifice of perpetual praiſe, to be thy ſervant for ever.

2. I offer unto thee, O Lord, all my ſins and offences, which I have committed before thee

and thy holy angels, from the day wherein I firſt could ſin, to this hour, upon thy merciful altar.

Conſume and burn them all with the fire of thy love, and waſh out all the ſtains of my ſins.

O cleanſe my conſcience from all offences, and reſtore to me again thy grace, which I loſt by ſin, fully forgiving me all my offences, and receiving me mercifully to the kiſs of peace!

3. What can I do for my ſins, but humbly confeſs and bewail them, and inceſſantly intreat thy favour?

I beſeech thee, hear me graciouſly, when I ſtand before thee, O my God!

All my ſins are very diſpleaſing unto me. I will never commit them any more; but I bewail and will bewail them as long as I live, and am purpoſed to repent, and according to the utmoſt of my power to pleaſe thee.

Forgive me, O God, forgive me my ſins for thy holy name's ſake.

Save my ſoul, which thou haſt redeemed with thy moſt precious blood.

Behold, I commit myſelf to thy mercy, I reſign myſelf over into thy hands.

Do with me according to thy goodneſs, not according to my wickedneſs and iniquity.

4. I offer up alſo unto thee all that is good in me, although it be very little and imperfect, that thou mayſt amend and ſanctify it:

That thou mayſt make it grateful and acceptable

ble unto thee, and always perfect it more and more.

And bring me also, who am a slothful and unprofitable creature, to a good and blessed end.

5. I offer up also unto thee all the pious desires of devout persons, the necessities of my parents, friends, brethren, sisters; and of all those that are dear unto me, and that have done good either to myself or others:

And that have desired me to pray for them and theirs; that they all may receive the help of thy grace and comfort, protection from dangers, deliverance from pain; and being freed from all evils, may joyfully give worthy thanks unto thee.

6. I offer up also unto thee my prayers, especially for them who have in any thing wronged, grieved, or slandered me, or have done me any damage or displeasure:

And for all those also, whom I have at any time troubled, grieved or scandalized by words or deeds, wittingly or unawares; that it may please thee to forgive us all our sins and offences one against another.

Take, O Lord, from our hearts all jealousy, indignation, wrath, and contention, and whatsoever may lessen brotherly love.

Have mercy, O Lord, have mercy on those that crave thy mercy: give grace unto them that stand in need thereof; and grant that we

may be counted worthy to enjoy thy grace, and to attain life everlasting. *Amen.*

CHAP. IX.

That the body of Christ, and the holy scripture, are most necessary unto a faithful soul.

The voice of the disciple.

O Lord Jesus, how great sweetness hath an holy soul that feasteth with thee in thy banquet, where there is set no other food to be eaten but thyself, her only beloved, and the most to be desired above all desires of her heart!

And verily it would be a sweet thing unto me to pour out tears from the very bottom of my heart in thy presence: and with holy *Magdalene* to wash thy feet with my tears.

But where is this devotion? Where is this plentiful shedding of holy tears?

Surely in the sight of thee and thy holy angels my whole heart should be inflamed, and even weep for joy.

2. For to behold thee in thine own divine brightness, mine eyes would not be able to endure it.

Neither could the whole world stand in the brightness of the glory of thy majesty.

I really enjoy and adore him whom the angels adore in heaven.

But I, as yet, by faith; they by ſight, and and without a veil.

I ought to be content with the light of true faith, and to walk therein until the day of everlaſting brightneſs break forth, and the ſhadows of figures paſs away.

But when that which is perfect ſhall come, the uſe of the ſacraments ſhall ceaſe.

For the bleſſed in heavenly glory need not any ſacramental remedy, but rejoice without end in the preſence of God.

Beholding his glory face to face, and being transformed from glory to glory into the image of the incomprehenſible Deity, they taſte the word of God made fleſh, as he was from the beginning, and as he remaineth for ever.

3. Thou art my witneſs, O God, that nothing can comfort me, no creature can give me reſt, but thou my God, whom I deſire to behold everlaſtingly.

But this is not poſſible while I remain in this mortal life:

Therefore I muſt frame myſelf to much patience, and ſubmit myſelf to thee in all my deſires.

For thy ſaints alſo, O Lord, who now rejoice with thee while they lived, expected in faith and great patience the coming of thy glory. What they believed, I believe: what they hop-

ed for, I alſo hope for: whither they are come, I truſt I ſhall come by thy grace.

In the mean time I will go forward in faith, ſtrengthened by their examples.

I have alſo thy holy book for my comfort and guide, and, above all theſe, thy ſpiritual body for a remedy and refuge.

4. I perceive two things to be eſpecially neceſſary for me in this life, without which it would be inſupportable, food and light.

Thou haſt therefore given unto me a weak creature, thy ſacred body and blood for the nouriſhment of my ſoul and body; and thou haſt ſet thy word as a light unto my feet:

Without theſe two I could not well live.

For the word of God is the light of the ſoul, and thy ſacrament the bread of life.

Theſe alſo may be called the two tables, ſet on the one ſide and on the other, in the ſtore-houſe of the holy church.

One is the holy altar, having the holy bread, that is the ſign of the precious body of Chriſt.

The other is of the divine law, containing holy doctrine, teaching the true faith, and certainly leading to that within the veil, where is the holy of holies.

Thanks be unto thee, O Lord Jeſus, the light of everlaſting light, for the table of holy doctrine, which thou haſt offered us by thy ſervants the prophets, and apoſtles, and other teachers.

5. Thanks

5. Thanks be unto thee, O thou Creator and Redeemer of man, who to manifeſt thy love to the whole world, haſt prepared a great ſupper wherein thou haſt ſet before us to be eaten (not the typical lamb, but) thy moſt ſacred body and blood.

Rejoicing all the faithful with thy holy banquet, and repleniſhing them with the cup of ſalvation, in which are all the delights of paradiſe; and the holy angels feaſt with us, but yet with a more happy ſweetneſs.

Nothing but what is holy, no word but what is good and profitable ought to proceed from his mouth, who receiveth the ſacrament of Chriſt.

7. Simple and chaſte ought to be the eyes that behold the body of Chriſt.

8. Aſſiſt us, Almighty God, with thy grace, that we who have undertaken the office of prieſthood, may ſerve thee worthily and devoutly, in all purity and good conſcience.

And, if we cannot live in ſo great innocency as we ought, grant us at leaſt duly to bewail the ſins which we have committed; and in the ſpirit of humility, and with full purpoſe of heart, to ſerve thee hereafter more fervently.

CHAP. IX.

How he who is to communicate, ought to prepare himself.

The voice of the Beloved.

I AM the lover of purity, and the giver of all holiness.

I seek a pure heart, and there is the place of my rest.

Make ready and adorn for me the great chamber, and I will keep with thee the passover among my disciples.

2. Know thou, notwithstanding, that no merit of any action of thine is able to make this preparation, altho' thou shouldst prepare thyself a whole year together, and think of nothing else.

Thou art of my mere grace and favour suffered to come to my table.

Like a beggar invited to dinner by a rich man, who hath nothing else to return him for his benefits, but to humble himself, and give him thanks.

Do what lieth in thee, and do it diligently; not for custom, nor for necessity; but with fear and reverence, and affection, receive thy beloved Lord God, who vouchsafeth to come unto thee.

* I am he that hath called thee; I have commanded

manded it to be done; I will supply what is wanting in thee; come and receive me.

3. When I bestow the grace of devotion, give thanks to thy God; for it is given thee, not for that thou art worthy, but because I have mercy on thee.

If thou hast it not, but dost feel thyself dry, continue in prayer, sigh, and knock, and give not over until thou art meet to receive some crumb or drop of saving grace.

Thou hast need of me, not I of thee.

Neither comest thou to sanctify me, but I come to sanctify and improve thee.

Thou comest that thou mayst be sanctified by me, and united unto me, that thou mayst receive new grace, and be enflamed anew to amendment.

CHAP. X.

That a devout soul ought to desire with her whole heart to be united unto Christ in the sacrament.

The voice of the disciple.

WHO will give me this, O Lord, to find thee alone, and open my whole heart unto thee, and enjoy thee as my soul desireth?

And that no man may look toward me, nor any creature move or regard me, but thou alone mayst speak unto me, and I to thee, as the belov-

ed is wont to ſpeak to his beloved, and a friend to banquet with his friend?

This I pray for, this I deſire, that I may be wholly united unto thee, and may withdraw my heart from all created things.

That I may be often communicating, learn more and more to reliſh heavenly and eternal things.

Ah Lord God, when ſhall I be wholly united to thee, ſwallowed up in thee, and altogether forgetful of myſelf?

Thou in me, and I in thee, and ſo grant us both to continue in one.

2. Verily, thou art my beloved, the choiceſt among thouſands, in whom my ſoul is well pleaſed to dwell all the days of her life.

Verily, thou art my peace-maker, in whom is great peace and true reſt, without whom is labour and ſorrow and infinite miſery.

Verily, thou art a God that hideſt thyſelf, and and thy counſel is not with the wicked, but thy ſpeech is with the humble and ſimple of heart.

O Lord, how ſweet is thy Spirit, who to ſhew thy ſweetneſs toward thy children, vouchſafeſt to feed them with the bread which deſcendeth from heaven, and is full of all ſweetneſs!

Verily, there is no other nation ſo great that hath God ſo nigh unto them, as thou our God art preſent to all thy faithful ones.

Unto whom, for their daily comfort, and for the

the raiſing up of their hearts to heaven, thou giveſt thyſelf to be eaten and enjoyed.

3. For what other nation is there ſo honoured as the Chriſtian people?

Or what creature under heaven ſo beloved as a devout ſoul, to whom God himſelf cometh to feed her with his glorious fleſh?

O unſpeakable grace! O admirable condeſcenſion! O infinite love, ſingularly beſtowed upon man!

But what ſhall I give unto the Lord in return for his grace, for ſo eminent an expreſſion of love?

There is nothing more acceptable, that I am able to give, than to give my heart wholly to my God, and to unite it cloſe unto him.

Then ſhall my inward parts rejoice, when my ſoul ſhall be perfectly united unto God.

Then he will ſay unto me, if thou wilt be with me, I will be with thee.

And I will anſwer him, Vouchſafe, O Lord, to remain with me, and I will gladly be with thee.

This is my whole deſire, that my heart may be united unto thee.

CHAP. XI.

Of the fervent deſire of ſome devout perſons, to receive the body of Chriſt.

The voice of the diſciple.

O HOW great is thy goodneſs, O Lord, which thou haſt laid up for them that fear thee!

When I remember ſome devout perſons, who come unto thy ſacrament. O Lord, with the greateſt affection, I am confounded, and bluſh within myſelf, that I come ſo heavily and coldly to thy table.

That I remain ſo dry and without hearty affection, that I am not wholly inflamed in thy preſence, my God, nor ſo earneſtly drawn in affection, as many devout perſons have been, who with deſire both of ſoul and body, earneſtly longed after thee, O God, the living fountain.

* Be merciful unto me, good Jeſu, gracious Lord, and grant me, thy poor needy creature, to feel ſometimes at leaſt, in this holy communion, ſomewhat of thy tender, cordial affection!

That my faith may be more ſtrengthened, my hope in thy goodneſs increaſed, and that my love once perfectly inflamed, after the taſting of heavenly manna, may never decay.

2. Thy mercy, O Lord, is able to give me the grace I deſire, and to viſit me moſt mercifully with the ſpirit of fervour when it ſhall pleaſe thee.

For though I burn not with ſo great deſires as thoſe that are ſo ſingularly devoted to thee: yet notwithſtanding, by thy grace, I deſire to have this inflamed deſire:

Praying and craving that I may partake with all

all ſuch thy fervent lovers, and be numbered among them.

CHAP. XII.

That the grace of devotion is obtained by humility and renouncing ourſelves.

The voice of the Beloved.

* THOU oughteſt to ſeek the grace of devotion fervently, to aſk it earneſtly, to expect it patiently and with confidence, to receive it gratefully, to keep it humbly, to work with it diligently, and to commit the time and manner of this heavenly viſitation to God, until it ſhall pleaſe him to come unto thee.

Thou oughteſt chiefly to humble thyſelf, when thou feeleſt inwardly little or no devotion; and yet not be too much dejected.

* God often giveth in a moment that which he hath a long time denied.

He giveth ſometimes in the end, that which in the beginning of prayer he deferred to grant.

* It is ſometimes a little thing that hindereth and hideth grace from us;

If it may be called little, and not rather great, that hindereth ſo great good.

But if thou removeſt this, be it great or ſmall, thou ſhalt have thy deſire.

2. For,

2. For, as ſoon as ever thou haſt delivered thyſelf to God with thy whole heart, and ſeekeſt not this or that for thine own pleaſure or will, but fixeſt thyſelf wholly upon him, thou ſhalt find thyſelf united and at peace.

For nothing will reliſh ſo well, and pleaſe thee ſo much, as what pleaſes the divine will.

Then ſhall he ſee, and be filled and wonder, and his heart ſhall be enlarged within him; becauſe the hand of the Lord is with him, and he hath put himſelf wholly into his hands for ever.

Behold, ſo ſhall the man be bleſſed that ſeeketh God with his whole heart, and buſieth not his ſoul in vain.

This man obtaineth a high degree of divine union, in receiving the holy euchariſt.

Becauſe he reſpecteth not his own devotion and comfort; but above all devotion and comfort, the honour and glory of God.

CHAP. XIII.

That we ought to lay open our neceſſities to Chriſt, and crave his grace.

The voice of the diſciple.

*O MOST loving Lord, whom I deſire to receive with all devotion, thou knoweſt my infirmity, and the neceſſity which I endure, with how many evils I am oppreſſed, how often

often I am grieved, tempted, troubled and defiled.

I am come unto thee for a remedy, I crave of thee comfort and ſuccour.

I ſpeak to him that knoweth all things, to whom all my inward parts are open, and who alone can perfectly comfort and help me.

Thou knoweſt what good things I ſtand moſt in need of, and how poor I am in virtues.

2. Behold, I ſtand before thee poor and naked, calling for grace, and craving mercy.

Refreſh thy hungry beggar, inflame my coldneſs with the fire of thy love, enlighten my blindneſs with the brightneſs of thy preſence.

Turn all earthly things to me into bitterneſs, all things grievous into patience, all created things into contempt and oblivion.

Lift up my heart to thee in heaven, and ſuffer me not to wander upon earth.

Be thou only ſweet unto me from henceforth for evermore.

For thou only art my meat and my drink, my love and my joy, my ſweetneſs and all my good.

3. O that with thy preſence thou wouldſt wholly inflame, burn, and transform me into thyſelf;

That I might be made one ſpirit with thee by the grace of inward union, and by the meltings of ardent love!

Suffer me not to go from thee hungry and thirſty;

thirſty; but deal mercifully with me, as thou haſt often dealt wonderfully with thy ſaints.

What marvel is it, if I ſhould be wholly inflamed by thee, and die to myſelf!

Since thou art a fire always burning and never decaying, love purifying the heart and enlightning the underſtanding!

CHAP. XIV.

Of fervent love, and vehement deſire to receive Chriſt.

The voice of the diſciple.

WITH great devotion and ardent love, with the affection and fervour of my whole heart I deſire to receive thee, O Lord, as many ſaints and devout perſons have deſired thee, when they received thy ſacrament.

O my God, my everlaſting love, my whole good, my never-ending happineſs, I would gladly receive thee with the moſt vehement deſire and moſt worthy reverence that any of the ſaints ever had.

2. And although I be unworthy to have all thoſe feelings of devotion, yet I offer unto thee the whole affection of my heart, as if I had all thoſe inflamed deſires:

Yea, and whatſoever an holy mind can conceive

ceive and desire, all this, with the greatest reverence, I offer and present unto thee.

I desire to reserve nothing to myself, but freely and most willingly to sacrifice myself and all mine unto thee.

My Lord God, my Creator and my Redeemer: I desire to receive thee this day with such affection, reverence, praise and honour, with such gratitude and love, with such faith, hope and purity, as thy holy mother received thee, when she humbly and devoutly answered the angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord, let it be "unto me according to thy word."

I offer and present unto thee, the joys, fervent affections, extasies, and supernatural illuminations and heavenly visions of all devout hearts, with all the virtues and praises celebrated by all creatures in heaven and earth, that by all thou mayst be worthily praised and glorified for ever.

4. Receive, my Lord God, my wishes and desires of giving thee infinite praise and immense blessing, which according to the multitude of thy unspeakable greatness, are most justly due unto thee.

These I yield thee, and desire to yield thee every day and moment; I do intreat and invite all heavenly minds, and all thy devout servants to give thanks and praises together with me.

5. Let all people, tribes and tongues, praise thee

thee and magnify thy holy name, with the higheſt joy and moſt fervent devotion;

And let all that reverently celebrate the ſacrament, find grace and mercy at thy hands, and pray humbly for me a ſinful creature.

And when they ſhall have obtained their deſired devotion and joyful union, and depart from thy ſacred table, well comforted, and marvellouſly refreſhed, let them vouchſafe to remember my poor ſoul.

A Treatiſe

A Treatise on

CHRISTIAN PRUDENCE.

Extracted from Mr. NORRIS.

CHAP. I.

Of the end proposed by Christian Prudence, *and the general means of obtaining it.*

1. BY prudence I here mean, the same with wisdom, a practical knowledge of the best end and the best means to attain it, actually directing us to the choice of that end, and the use of those means.

2. The end of every reasonable creature is God: for he alone is the true object of our happiness: all the happiness we desire, or are capable of, being to be found in him, and him only.

3. That the happiness of man is not to be found in any thing but in God, is usually proved by

by ſhewing that it cannot conſiſt in ſenſual pleaſure, riches, honour or power. But the ſhorteſt way of proving it is, by ſhewing at once that it cannot conſiſt in any created good. For as by happineſs we mean a ſtate wherein the mind totally acquieſces, and takes full reſt and ſatisfaction, ſo that which is the object of happineſs muſt be ſuch a good, as perfectly ſatisfies the mind, contents all its deſires, and gives it an abſolute tranquility and repoſe. But that no creature does this is plain from experience, from the vanity which we find in all things, and that reſtleſneſs and deſire of change which is conſequent upon it. * We try one thing after another, as the ſearching bee wanders from flower to flower; but we go off from every one with diſappointment, and a deluded expectation. Almoſt every thing promiſes, but nothing anſwers, and even the ſucceſſion of new enjoyments (the beſt remedy for the emptineſs we find in each) amuſes, but does not ſatisfy. And as no created good actually does this, ſo 'tis plain by reaſon none can. For as none but infinite truth can ſatisfy the underſtanding, ſo only infinite good can ſatisfy the will. But this the creature is not. As its being is, ſo is its goodneſs, both of a limited extent, and ſo by no means fit to ſatisfy the capacity of that mind, which aſpires after all good. Every creature therefore muſt confeſs its utter inſufficiency to be the object of our happineſs: Nay, the whole collection and amaſment of created

ated good, muſt acknowledge the ſame; the very depth and abyſs of it muſt ſay, *It is not in me.*

4. It is in God alone: he is the fountain of eternal bleſſedneſs; all the ſprings of our happineſs are in him: he is our good, and our end, as being every way ſufficient for our happineſs. For he is all goodneſs; he is that infinite good which is the entire and adequate object of our will; and which being the proper object of all its inclinations, muſt needs be able to ſatisfy them. They cannot aſpire to any thing beyond him, and therefore muſt needs center and acquieſce in him. *When I awake up after thy likeneſs*, I ſhall be ſatisfied with it. Then, and not before; which all reſolves into that pious ſaying of St. *Auſtin*, *Thou haſt made us for thyſelf, and our heart has no reſt till it reſts in thee.*

5. It muſt therefore be the firſt office of Chriſtian prudence, to make God our end. For indeed not to do ſo, is the greateſt folly that any man can poſſibly be guilty of. For what can we expect but vanity and diſappointment all over, a fruitleſs labour, and a deluded and abortive hope, if we place our happineſs any where but in him, who is the true object of it? 'Tis like leaning with our full force upon what cannot bear our weight, the conſequence of which is, to fall with violence. And what an imprudence is this, eſpecially for a Chriſtian, ſince the clear revelation

revelation of the gospel, concerning the true end and final happiness of man: wherein our Saviour hath plainly declared, *This is life eternal to know thee, the only true God!* Since God has not only given us a nature capable of happiness, but has also endued us with faculties and desires, which nothing but himself can satisfy, and he both can and will; and above all, since he has been pleased, lest we should miss the end of of our being, to point it out to us, and to tell us that himself is the good, which we so passionately desire, and so blindly seek; it must be the very foolishness of folly for any Christian not to make God his end; much more, so to forget himself and him, as to place it in any thing of this vain world: whether it be directly and professedly, according to the language of the rich epicure, *Soul, take thy ease*; or consequentially, by pursuing the world, and cleaving to its interests, as if it were his end. And besides the folly of this conduct, it bespeaks also such a contempt of God, and of his immense greatness and goodness, as nothing can either parallel or excuse! Especially since the Son of God hath been pleased to concern himself so far for our happiness, as to make this great and excellent end attainable to us, preparing and providing, and procuring an union and communion of God with man, by uniting them both in his own person. Whether, therefore we consider the excellency,

cellency, or the attainableneſs of this good, or the manner or price whereby it becomes attainable, God, by all means, is to be made our end, the end of all our deſires, and the end of all our deſigns, the end of all our undertakings, all our actions, and all our hopes, to which we are to refer whatever we think, whatever we ſpeak, and whatever we act, and in one word, to which our whole life is to be directed.

6. What a thorough concern then ought every Chriſtian to feel, how hearty a care ought he to take for the obtaining and ſecuring this his right and only end, the fruition of God? This our Saviour calls *The one thing needful*, in oppoſition to the many things that are apt to trouble and diſtract us in this buſy life, which unleſs ſo far as they fall in with this, are all mere trifle and amuſement. Even thoſe affairs which carry the face of the greateſt ſerioufneſs, and pretend to be of the weightieſt conſequence, if they are not ſo many parts of this, are *lighter than vanity and nothing*. For indeed a man has but one buſineſs in the world, and that is, to make ſure his everlaſting happineſs, and to ſecure to himſelf the fruition of that excellent good, which is the true end of his being. This is the whole of man, his only conſiderable intereſt, and that upon which all depends. 'Tis not neceſſary, that he ſhould be born to an eſtate, or that he ſhould acquire one. 'Tis not neceſſary that he ſhould ſucceed in his attempts, for this

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or that dignity or preferment; that he ſhould live long to enjoy his wealth or greatneſs, or even that he ſhould live at all. But it is abſolutely neceſſary that he ſhould arrive at his end, that he ſhould attain to the fruition of God, whoſe loving-kindneſs is better than life, and without whom he cannot be happy. All the reſt may be ſpared, but there is no diſpenſing with this. Should he loſe all beſides, and gain this one thing, yet ſtill he would be happy. And ſhould he gain all beſides, and loſe this one thing, yet ſtill he would be miſerable: for what gain will ever make amends for ſuch a loſs? Not that of the whole world, if we believe our Saviour: *What ſhall it profit a man, if he ſhall gain the whole world, and loſe his own ſoul?* Which is then only loſt, when it loſes God. 'Tis therefore one great part of the prudence of every Chriſtian, after he has fixed this his right end, to endeavour, by much conſideration, to poſſeſs his mind with a due ſenſe of its moment and importance; and of what conſequence it is, that he ſhould ſucceed in this affair, whatever he miſcarries in beſides: which when he is once thoroughly convinced of, he will then diligently apply himſelf to the uſe of ſuch means as are neceſſary thereto.

7. All the particular acts of prudence with regard to theſe means, may be ſummed up in one general one, and that is, to chuſe thoſe very means to this our great end, which God has

chosen for us already. To follow his, is indeed an implicit choice, but at the same time 'tis a very safe and a very wise one. For he cannot but know what means are most fit to procure the end for which he made us. And he will not impose upon our weakness, or do what he hath forbidden us, *Make the blind go out of his way*. And therefore, without enquiring into its intrinsic nature, we may securely depend upon this in general, that the way which he has prescribed, must be the very best, and consequently, that it is our wisdom to walk in it.

* 8. Now the means which God hath chosen for us are no other than his commandments, which were intended by God for our direction to happiness. As he made us for himself, so the laws which he prescribes to us are but a pursuance of the same kind design, namely, to bring us to himself. For since we cannot suppose him to propose any advantage of his own, by giving us rules of life; and since we can as little suppose that he does it for so poor a reason as only to shew his authority, and much less that he does it for no reason at all, we cannot but conclude, that the laws of God are given us with this design, to shew us the path of life, the true way to that great end for which we were made, the everlasting fruition of God. A consideration which, by the way, ought greatly to endear the laws of God to us, and invite us to yield a free,

ready, and chearful obedience to them. Eſpecially if we add,

9. That as they were given for our direction to happineſs, ſo they actually lead to it: *If thou wilt enter into life*, ſaith our Saviour, *keep the commandments*. This is the path of life, the way of the kingdom, the direct road that leads to happineſs, deſcribed to us by him who is himſelf the way, the truth and the life, and men may employ their wits, conſult their eaſe, and flatter their hopes in the invention of other ways; but if we will believe our guide, the way of happineſs is the way of obedience.

10. That it is ſo by the poſitive order and appointment of God, is plain from the whole tenor of the goſpel. And equally plain it is, that he therefore appointed theſe means, becauſe they naturally conduce to our happineſs. For ſome things are, by the very original conſtitution of their being, conducive to our good, as others to our hurt; the former he commands, and the latter he forbids. That there is this difference in things with regard to our preſent happineſs, is evident from experience. Temperance, for inſtance, is more conducive than intemperance to the health of the body, and conſequently to the health of the mind too, as depending upon the other. The power which plants have variouſly to affect our bodies, either by the way of phyſic or poiſon, is not more

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plain and certain than the different influence which different diſpoſitions have upon the well or ill being of our ſouls. And God in his laws concerning theſe things, does but what a phyſician does for thoſe, whoſe health he takes care of; he preſcribes the wholſome diet or phyſic, and forbids the poiſon.

11. The ſame obſervation will hold as to future happineſs; which reſulting (as all happineſs does) from a certain proportion and agreement between the faculty and the object, muſt depend upon, and require a certain temper and diſpoſition of the mind, as a natural qualification for it. We find it is even ſo in the pleaſures of ſenſe. Let the ear be unmuſically diſpoſed, and the ſweeteſt ſounds put together with the greateſt art, will give it no entertainment. And if the organs of taſte are indiſpoſed, either naturally or by a diſeaſe, the moſt delicious food is brought in vain, which, as it finds no taſte, will give no reliſh. And if it be thus in the loweſt pleaſures, can it be otherwiſe in the higheſt? If a gueſt ſits idle at a nice and plentiful table, merely becauſe he wants a ſtomach to eat, or a palate to reliſh what he finds there, ſhall an indiſpoſed ſoul enjoy God? Is there no diſpoſition requiſite to make it reliſh the heavenly banquet? Are theſe the *only* pleaſures that are to be enjoyed at any rate, and however diſpoſed we come to them? No, without doubt there are diſpoſitions for this, as well as for other

enjoyments, a certain temper of mind, which as the apoſtle ſpeaks, is to make us *meet partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light.*

12. Now this temper that qualifies us for happineſs, muſt be in general, to be like him who is the object of it, to have our minds conformable to his mind, and our wills conformable to his will; to reſemble him as far as he is imitable by us, to have a godlike frame of ſpirit, or, as the apoſtle expreſſes it, *to be partakers of the divine nature.* And that for this clear reaſon, becauſe without being in ſome meaſure like God, 'tis not poſſible we ſhould enjoy him, or take any delight in beholding his excellent glory. But *when I awake up after thy likeneſs, I ſhall be ſatisfied with it.* Lord, what a ſatisfying likeneſs is thine? Our likeneſs to the world makes us love it, but the love of it does not ſatisfy. O make us like unto thee, that we may be ſatisfied with thee!

13. More particularly, the temper that qualifies us for happineſs, conſiſts in thoſe virtuous diſpoſitions, which the goſpel enjoins to all Chriſtians, ſuch as truth, juſtice and mercy: becauſe in theſe conſiſts that part of the divine nature, wherein alone we can be like him: his other perfections being peculiar to himſelf, and as ſuch as no creature can partake of. And accordingly we are exhorted to *be holy, as the Lord our God is holy; to be followers of God, as dear children; to be perfect, as our Father which is in heaven is perfect.*

perfect. There is therefore a neceſſity for us, to be like God, that we may enjoy him, ſo as to be endued with virtuous habits, without which we cannot be like him, nor conſequently enjoy him.

14. But there are two diſpoſitions, which are more particularly neceſſary to qualify us for the fruition of God, charity and purity: that charity, as it ſignifies the love of our neighbour, is a neceſſary qualification is plain, becauſe without this we can't be like God, who is all love and goodneſs, overflowing with kindneſs to all his creatures, and continually doing good to them all, as far as they are capable of receiving it. If ever therefore we mean to be happy with and in him, we muſt be of the ſame good loving ſpirit. And as to charity, taken in its primary ſenſe, for the love of God, this is ſo immediate a qualification for happineſs, that nothing can be more ſo, ſince all enjoyment depends upon the love of what we are poſſeſſed of, and therefore unleſs we love God, 'tis impoſſible we ſhould enjoy him. And for this reaſon it is, that the love of God is ſo ſtrictly enjoined, and in ſo high a meaſure, no leſs than that of our whole heart and ſoul, and mind and ſtrength; and that the precept which requires it is called, the firſt and great commandment: firſt and great in many reſpects, and particularly in this, that 'tis the fundamental qualification for, hap-

pineſs, as immediately reſpecting the object of it, which if we do not love, we can never enjoy.

* 15. The other great qualification for the enjoyment of God is purity; that part of it eſpecially which relates to the pleaſures of ſenſe. Now the reaſon why this is ſuch a qualification for our final happineſs is this: God, the object of it is a ſpiritual being, and the happineſs of heaven which conſiſts in the fruition of him, is all over of a rational and intellectual nature: being indeed no other than this, the pleaſure of the underſtanding contemplating the ſupreme truth, and of the will tranſported with the love of the ſovereign good. And therefore a love of ſenſual pleaſure muſt indiſpoſe us for the love of a good ſo purely ſpiritual. And if ever it riſes ſo high as to become the prevailing and governing affection of the ſoul (the caſe and character of thoſe who are *lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God*) it muſt utterly unqualify us for it. For what can a ſenſualized ſoul find in heaven, that will ſuit with his diſtempered taſte? A *Mahometan* paradiſe would ſuit with ſuch affections well; but in heaven they would meet with nothing but diſappointment; and therefore St. *Peter*, with a preſſing earneſtneſs, cautions us againſt them: *Dearly beloved, I beſeech you as ſtrangers and pilgrims, abſtain from fleſhly deſires that war againſt the ſoul.* They war againſt the ſoul, not only by betraying us into ſin, either

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by consenting to them in unlawful circumstances, or by indulging them in an immoderate degree, but chiefly by indisposing us for the enjoyment of a far nobler happiness. And accordingly St. *John*, among all virtuous dispositions, singles out purity as a preparation for heaven. *Every man*, says he, *that hath this hope, purifieth himself as he is pure.* And our Saviour applies this purity to the heart, to shew how that ought to be disposed for happiness. *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see* God. O infinite purity, what heart will be fit to see thee, if thou dost not purge and cleanse it? O purify us by thy grace, and so fit us for thy glory!

16. By all these considerations it appears, that the commandments of God are the means that lead us to happiness. And for this reason it is, that God, who is willing we should be happy, having made us for that very end, requires them of us, and obliges us to them by all the authority he has over us. For this reason it is, for instance, that he commands us to love him. What is our love to him? Nothing at all. But though it be nothing to him, yet it is to ourselves, as being a necessary qualification for our happiness. This God knows, and therefore requires us to love him; nay, to love him with all our heart and all our strength, because he knows a less degree of love is neither of him, nor will qualify us to be happy in him. And so in every other instance, God makes those things our duty, which

have a close connection with our happiness; and this is that which makes his laws so good and so excellent, and his service a truly reasonable service; for certainly nothing can be more reasonable, than for a man to pursue his own good, nor consequently than to serve and obey God, since this is a certain means to that end, and his own good is the natural fruit of that obedience; and how should this (as was intimated before) endear the service of God to us? How should it make us in love with our duty to him, and glad to be subject to his government? How should it incite us, to yield the most free, ready, chearful and zealous obedience to his laws? In a word, to do his will on earth as the angels do it in heaven, since our own advantage is both the reason of his laws, and the sure consequence of keeping them. * Every prudent Christian therefore looks upon the commandments of God, not as so many imperious curbs and retrenchments of his liberty, nor as so many arbitrary impositions, much less as burthens and grievances (as human laws sometimes are, for want of wisdom or goodness in those that make them) but as so many kind provisions for our happiness, and so many merciful instructions to bring us to our true end: and in this view he yields them obedience, not such as is forced and violent, servile and extorted by fear, such as slaves pay to tyrants, but such as is liberal and ingenuous, and wherein love is the prevailing principle; as becomes one who is

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under a government so good and gracious, and so every way directed and administered for the best advantage of the subject, as that of God is.

17. And now since it appears that the means that lead to our end, the great highway to happiness, are no other than the commandments of God, it appears with equal clearness, that the one business of every prudent Christian is, to pay a due obedience to all these commandments. This is our wisdom, and indeed the only wise thing we can do, not to indulge our own fancies, not to fulfil our own will, or to follow the devices and desires of our own hearts, but to apply ourselves to the law of God, to lay hold of those *paths of life* which he hath described to us. By doing this, we shall give a better proof of our wisdom, than by all the fine-wrought plots, and cunning intrigues of worldly policy, or by the most acute reasonings of philosophy, or deepest treasures of learning. These things cast indeed a dazzling light, and make a figure in the world: but after all, the wisdom of man is, to attain to his end, and consequently to find and use the true means of attaining it. And since the commandments of God are those true means, *to keep and do them is our wisdom and understanding*, or, as *Job* expresses it: *Behold, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding.*

18. It is not only wiſdom, but our wiſdom, the wiſdom of *man*, the wiſdom that belongs to his *nature*, as being made for happineſs; that belongs to the preſent *ſtate* and *condition* of his nature, as having capacities to qualify himſelf fully for this; whereas his faculties will carry him but a very little way in ſpeculative knowledge: it is the wiſdom that belongs to his preſent *circumſtances* in this world, which is wholly in order to the other, and is no farther conſiderable than it is a preparation for eternity; and after this I need not ſay, it is the wiſdom that belongs to his *intereſt*, nothing being more evident, than that it is every man's greateſt intereſt to be everlaſtingly happy. Upon all which conſiderations it appears, that the ſtudy and practice of God's commandments, the devoting himſelf to his ſervice, and to the obedience of all his laws, is the true and proper wiſdom of man, in which alone he is concerned to employ and improve himſelf, and to which all his other learning, knowledge and buſineſs, all he thinks, ſays, or does, is to be referred.

CHAP. II.

How far Chriſtian Prudence *is concerned in the manner of keeping* God's *commandments.*

1. AS to the manner of keeping God's commandments, the main difficulty is in the *doing*

doing, and not in determining what in prudence ought to be done. Prudence doubtleſs (as well as duty) requires, that we ſhould keep them in as good a manner as we can. For ſince the commandments of God are evidently the means that qualify us for happineſs, it follows, that the better they are kept by *us*, the more we ſhall be qualified by *them*. Now 'tis unqueſtionably the part of every prudent man, to obtain as much happineſs as he can: and conſequently to do his beſt to ſerve God, and keep his commandments, in the moſt perfect manner he is able; becauſe the better he keeps them, the happier he will be; and no wiſe man would be leſs happy when he may be more ſo.

2. Setting aſide therefore all inducements of either love or fear, all arguments of gratitude or generoſity, all the reaſonableneſs and juſtice of ſerving God, and living in obedience to his laws, all the pleaſures of religion, and the preſent advantage of it both to our ſouls and bodies I ſay, tho' we ſhould ſet aſide all theſe conſiderations, yet there is a prudential conſideration, ſufficient to engage every wiſe Chriſtian to do his beſt, and to be as holy as he can, *viz.* That the better he is, the happier he will be; every addition to virtue being ſo much ſtock laid in for his future happineſs. The queſtion concerning *degrees of glory*, ſeems to have been put merely for argument ſake, for it cannot be put ſeriouſly, but by one that is as ignorant of the nature of things, as

of divine revelation: were the ſcripture ſilent, yet the very nature of the thing infers it; for ſince holineſs is a natural qualification for happineſs, it neceſſarily follows, that the more holineſs the more happineſs; and conſequently, that the beſt muſt be the happieſt man; and therefore 'tis great prudence for every Chriſtian, to labour to be excellently good, as good as he can be, according to the meaſure of grace imparted to him. To reduce this to an inſtance; our Saviour has annexed to purity of heart a particular bleſſedneſs, even that of ſeeing God: whence we may gather, that this is a particular qualification for the beatific viſion, and accordingly, that thoſe who have moſt of this purity, will be moſt happy, as either ſeeing more of God, or as being more delighted with what they ſee of him; and therefore every prudent Chriſtian *that hath this hope*, will ſtudy to *purify himſelf* as much as he can, that ſo he may be a more meet partaker of that happineſs, which is promiſed to the pure in heart.

* 3. Let not therefore any Chriſtian content himſelf with his preſent ſtate, or his paſt attainments in goodneſs; much leſs let him deſignedly aim at a ſlender degree, ſuch as he thinks may juſt carry him to heaven. He may be miſtaken in his meaſure, and when laid in the balance be found wanting: but ſuppoſe he be not, yet he ſtands in his own light, and is frugal to his own great loſs: for, 'tis but an ill thrift to deal

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hardly for heaven, and to think to go thither the cheapeſt way; ſince beſide the danger of miſcarrying, ſo much as he abates of his holineſs, ſo much he abates of his own perfection, and cuts ſhort his own happineſs: and where is the gain or the wiſdom of ſuch a thrift? 'Tis folly and loſs all over. Let us not therefore reſt ſatisfied with narrow and ſcanty meaſures, much leſs expreſly deſign them: for beſides, that 'tis not eaſy to *perſevere* in ſuch a weak and languiſhing ſtate of piety (every little blaſt of temptation being ready to blow out a lamp that is fed with ſo little oil:) ſuppoſe we ſhould perſevere in it, yet there is no getting over this conſideration, that the more we come ſhort in goodneſs, the more we ſhall fall ſhort in happineſs; that every abatement in the former is ſo much deducted from the latter, a jewel taken out of their crown. Therefore let no one who pretends to Chriſtian prudence, ſit down with a low infant-ſtate of goodneſs, but let him endeavour to grow in grace, and always to abound in the work of the Lord: not contenting himſelf with his preſent ſtate, but always ſtudying to excel himſelf, to grow better and better, and to make a conſtant progreſs in religion, correcting what is amiſs, and ſupplying what is wanting, and aſpiring after the largeſt meaſures and fulleſt degrees of holineſs, always remembring, that all the while he is thus ſerving God, he is conſulting his own intereſt, and that the more goodneſs

goodneſs he brings with him to heaven, the more happineſs he will find there.

4. In conſequence of this, a prudent Chriſtian will begin betimes, and ſet out early in the ways of piety; not only that he may have the advantage of the morning, the proper time for travelling, and the ſatisfaction of ſerving God in the prime of his age, and the vigour of his ſtrength: but alſo that he may lengthen his day, and have the more time to ſerve God in, and to prepare himſelf for the fruition of him in glory; that he may have the more time before him, to correct his diſorders, to fill up his deficiencies, to regulate his paſſions, to purify his heart, to perfect his habits, to adorn his ſoul with all Chriſtian virtues; in a word, to compoſe the ſtate and frame of his mind for happineſs, and to put himſelf in a due order for heaven. For theſe reaſons 'tis Chriſtian prudence to begin betimes, to run the way of God's commandments, and not to defer that work to the declining part of life, which is the one buſineſs of the whole.

5. But if it be prudence, as to keep the commandments of God, ſo to keep them in the very beſt manner we can, what ſhall we think of thoſe who ſerve God by halves, who halt between two maſters, the almoſt Chriſtians? Becauſe this is ſo common a caſe, it may be proper to beſtow ſome reflections upon it. I ſhall therefore conſider more at large,

Firſt,

First, what it is that hinders their rising any higher than to be almost Christians. And

Secondly, The imprudence of this lame way of serving God, of being Christians by halves.

* 6. First, The general hindrance to our being more than almost Christians, is the corrupt perverseness of human nature: this it was that made the fair inclinations of King *Agrippa* proceed no farther than they did: than to extort from him that ingenuous confession, *Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.* Then, it seems, he was not absolutely persuaded, tho' he was inclining toward it. Poor *Agrippa!* He had heard St. *Paul* giving an account of his manner of life from his youth, and of his miraculous conversion to Christianity, with great plainness, modesty and simplicity, and was not a little affected with the discourse; especially with the conclusion, *King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest.* This nearly touched him, and left a very sensible impression upon his heart.

And yet there was something more prevalent within him, that would not suffer him quite to yield. He had a good mind to be a Christian, but fear, interest and prejudice outweighed that inclination, and after some uncertain suspenses, the scale turned on the other side. And this is the case of too many: they have several good thoughts and purposes: but their thoughts and purposes are too much like the endeavours of those that are trying to wake out of a deep sleep, into

into which they ſink back again, overcome by the dead weight that hangs upon them. There is a weight, an impediment in their will, that ſtops the wheels of virtuous action, ſo that there can be no motion, tho' the ſprings of religion bear ever ſo hard upon them. Sometimes indeed conſcience works ſo ſtrongly, that ſhe wants but little of gaining her point. But even that little, it ſeems, is too much; ſhe is like a bowl thrown up againſt a ſteep bank, which it nimbly climbs, till it is juſt about to lodge and ſettle at the top: but wanting ſome degrees of force to overcome the reſiſtance, it cannot reach it, and rolls back again.

7. *Thou art not far from the kingdom of* God, was juſt ſuch a caſt as this: and *yet lackeſt thou one thing*, was ſuch another. Theſe men's religion had carried them a good way, and they were well onward in their journey to heaven; but it tired, and grew faint in the latter ſtages of the road, which was found either too narrow or too long, and ſo they ſtopped ſhort, and made an eternal halt, when a little more reſolution would have carried them through. The ſame thing we now ſee every day; there are many who have a liking to religion, who have had a good natural diſpoſition, aſſiſted by a religious education. Nor are they only inclined to religion, but partly practiſe it; they do many things, and forbear others. All goes on hopefully toward a thorough converſion; they are already paſt the moſt painful

ful part of it, and are now upon the critical point; ſo that a grain or two more would turn the ſcale; inſomuch, that there begins to be joy in heaven, and the angels are tuning their harps: yet there wants a little more weight on the ſide of religion, for want of which the counter-weight prevails againſt it; againſt reaſon, religion and divine grace together. They have indeed the workings of religion upon them; they feel ſeveral pangs of the new-birth; but after all, they want ſtrength to bring forth.

8. The imprudence of this lame way of ſerving God (which I was to ſhew in the ſecond place) appears firſt from this, that it is inſufficient. Such a half religion can never hold weight in the balance of the ſanctuary. Such men, 'tis true, are almoſt good; but almoſt to hit the mark is really to miſs it. For religion conſiſts in an entire love of God, and an effectual reſolution to obey him. Even a bad man may love what is good in ſome degree, but not with an effectual, prevailing love. This therefore is what denominates a man good, when religion is the commanding biaſs of his ſoul. And none but thoſe who are thus thoroughly good, are ſo good as to be fit for happineſs. To make us capable of that, there muſt be a peculiar frame of mind, to affect which in us is the one buſineſs of religion. And if it does this only almoſt, and by halves, as it can never bring us to heaven, ſo

neither

neither if it could, would it be able to make us happy there.

* 9. This imperfect piety is farther condemned by Christian prudence as very absurd. If we did not intend to go through, why did we set out? If we did, why do we stop? If we think there is no reason in religion, why do we any thing? But if we think there is, why don't we do enough? For the same reason that we do so much, why don't we do more? For either religion has truth on its side, or not. If not, why do we take so much labour *needlessly?* But if it has, why do we take so much labour *in vain?* 'Tis, I own, a strange piece of even brutal indifference, to do nothing in order to our eternal happiness: and, yet, methinks, to do a part only, has something in it more extravagant than the other. He that does nothing, whatever he loses besides, has yet no labour to lose. But to labour by halves, is to lose the same good, and all that we do in order to it. The atheist and libertine have something to pretend; but the half-religious has no excuse; since that very religion he has will condemn him, as an inconsistent, unprincipled fool.

10. The last censure of Christian prudence upon the half-way state of piety, is, that it is very unhappy, I mean even in this world. The almost Christian is the *double-minded man* St. *James* speaks of, who has two wills, one for God and another for the world, between which he variously

ouſly fluctuates. Such an one is *unſtable in all his ways:* he is a mixed, doubtful, unſettled, wavering creature, never out of perplexities and intanglements, always diſconformable to himſelf, doing what he would not, and not doing what he would and ſhould, never long ſatisfied with himſelf. He has indeed a kindneſs for religion, but he has a greater kindneſs for ſomething elſe; ſo that his religion juſt ſerves to diſturb the enjoyment of his luſts, as his luſts to deprive him of the comfort of his religion. Nor can he be perfectly at peace with himſelf, but by being thoroughly wicked or thoroughly good. So wicked as to *have his conſcience ſear'd with a hot iron*, or ſo good as to act up to his principles. He muſt be of a ſingle mind, one way or the other, before he can be at reſt. And yet this double-mindedneſs is the ſtate in which moſt men chuſe to live and die, having religion enough to diſturb them in their ſins, but not enough to engage them to part with them.

* 11. And now methinks, I hear one ſaying within himſelf, *Almoſt thou perſuadeſt me to be a Chriſtian.* Alas! why not *quite?* Is it that we want the art of addreſs, that we do not touch the right ſpring of your ſoul? But ſure our cauſe has weight enough to bear itſelf out, and to ſupply any defect in the management of it. For is there not truth and reaſon enough in religion, to gain a reaſonable creature? Or can any motive have a greater force or perſuaſion, than the joys of heaven

heaven and the pains of hell? Or do you queſtion whether God be able to reward your entire love and compleat obedience? If you indeed *believe that* God *is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him*, as even your indifferent way of ſerving him ſeems to ſuppoſe, then you muſt needs think it wiſdom, to lift up the hands that hang down, and ſtrengthen the feeble knees; to be heartily and thoroughly religious, and not to be guilty of ſo inconſiſtent a folly as to take *ſome* pains all your life for heaven, and yet go at laſt to hell.

12. Conſidering then the inſufficiency, the abſurdity, and the unhappineſs of a half religion, let us inſtantly labour *to fill up the things that are behind*, that are wanting to the meaſure of our righteouſneſs. Let us earneſtly endeavour to bring ourſelves under the full power and influence of religion, that it may have its due work upon our hearts and lives, that we may *be perfect, entire, and wanting nothing:* always imploring the Holy Spirit of God, by the victorious ſweetneſs of his divine grace, to give the laſt finiſhing to that holy birth, he is forming in us, that it may *come to a perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of* Chriſt: that ſo, according to the apoſtle's wiſh, we may be both almoſt, and altogether Chriſtians!

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the subordinate means that serve to assist us in keeping the commandments of God.

1. WE have seen that the immediate means to happiness are the commandments of God. We come now to consider the subordinate means to it, which serve to assist us in the keeping of those commandments. And these are of two sorts: either such as are appointed and commanded by God, or such as are recommended by human prudence.

2. Of the first sort is prayer. This is a glorious means, to withdraw our thoughts, and affections from sensible objects, and to fix them upon God and the things of heaven: to stir up in us a sense of our wants and infirmities, and to quicken our desires of what we pray for: to maintain a religious warmth in our minds, and to keep up there a spirit of devotion, the flame of which would soon be extinct without the breathings of prayer to fan it, and give it motion: to nourish our communion with God, and make us continually mindful of him, *in whom we live, move, and have our being*. It is also a key to open the store-houses of God's treasures to us, whereby we may obtain a supply of all our wants, and particularly *grace to help in time of need*, to enable us to resist all temptations.

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3. A prudent Christian will therefore pray often: for temporal things conditionally, as not knowing whether, or how far these may be for his good, or serve as means to his end. But for spiritual, such as pardon of sin, and grace to leave it, he will pray not only with greater earnestness, but also absolutely, and without any condition, because he knows that God *would have all men to be saved*, to attain the happiness for which he made them; and that those (if he be not wanting to himself) are certain means to his salvation.

4. Reading of the scriptures is the next means which God has ordained to assist us in keeping his commandments. And an excellent means it is, both to enlighten our understanding, and to compose our minds into a religious temper. *All scripture is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.* And therefore every prudent Christian gives all attendance to reading it. And that not out of curiosity, or for speculation only, but with a practical design, to learn and do the whole will of God. And accordingly he will not lay them aside, when he thinks he understands them, but will renew and continue his perusal of them, for his constant and greater edification. His delight will ever be in the law of the Lord, and in his law will he meditate day and night.

5. A

5. A third means of religion appointed by God, is the hearing the word preached. This is a ſtanding proviſion which God has made for the edification of his church; therefore a prudent Chriſtian, who never thinks himſelf too wiſe to learn, or too good to be better, and who never omits any means that may bring him nearer his end, is careful to pay his due attendance to it, humbly waiting for the grace and bleſſing of God in the uſe of his own ordinance.

6. Neither will the ſacraments, fourthly, be ever undervalued or neglected by a prudent Chriſtian, who never thinks himſelf either too wiſe or too good for any inſtitution of God. As to the Lord's *ſupper* in particular, he never omits any opportunity of receiving it, knowing the excellent ends for which it ſerves, and its great uſefulneſs to ſerve them. It ſerves as a ſenſible image of the death of Chriſt, and of our ſpiritual communion with him; as a memorial of his atonement for our ſins, actually applying it to ourſelves. In ſhort, it ſerves as a channel to convey all the bleſſings of God to us, and as a pledge to aſſure us of them. And in all this he admires the wiſdom and goodneſs of God, in making this merciful proviſion for his church, who, conſidering our frame, and how large a ſhare ſenſe has in our compoſition, was pleaſed, in condeſcenſion to our infirmity, to addreſs himſelf to us by that weaker ſide of our nature; and leſt, in ſuch a croud of ſenſible objects, as we daily converſe

with

with, we ſhould (as we are too apt) be tempted to forget him, was pleaſed, by thoſe very objects, to bring us to himſelf, by making uſe of ſome of them as his *remembrancers*, and as ſteps whereby we might aſcend to the contemplation of the moſt ſpiritual and heavenly myſteries.

7. *Church-communion*, in the laſt place, is an excellent means for the mutual edification of Chriſtians; for the preſervation of the Chriſtian faith and doctrine, and for the encouragement of Chriſtian practice. And ſince for theſe and the like reaſons, God, by his Son Jeſus Chriſt, has erected and conſtituted that ſpiritual ſociety call'd *a church*, whereof the ſame Jeſus Chriſt is the head, as that is his body, according to the apoſtle; Chriſtian prudence obliges every man not to look upon himſelf only as a private or independent Chriſtian, that is at liberty to ſerve God as he pleaſes, in his own ſolitary way, but as a member of this one church, whereof Chriſt is the head, and conſequently bound to hold communion with it. This therefore, a prudent Chriſtian will be ſure to do, and think it a great happineſs and privilege to have ſuch a help, to enjoy the communion of ſaints, and worſhip God in the aſſemblies of his people. From theſe he will by no means *excommunicate* himſelf: but as he is in ſpirit united to the whole Chriſtian church, ſo he actually communicates with that particular branch of it, whereof he is a member: and hereby he ſhews his union with the whole,

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in which he will be careful to make no ſchiſm; leſt, by dividing from that church whereof Chriſt is the head, he be divided from Chriſt, his end as well as his way.

CHAP. IV.

The conduct of a prudent Chriſtian, with regard to the government of himſelf.

1. HITHERTO we have been conducting our prudent Chriſtian to his end, by the chief of the ways that lead to it, *viz.* by the direct and immediate means of happineſs, firſt, the duties of the divine law, and then by the means to thoſe means, ſuch of them in particular, as are of divine appointment. For the application of which, it may now be convenient to draw a little nearer, and conſider the conduct which a prudent Chriſtian uſes in the government of himſelf.

2. And firſt let us conſider the prudent Chriſtian purſues improvement by the government of his ſenſes. He does not ſtudy the pleaſing of his ſenſes. This indeed many make the great end of their lives, which are almoſt wholly devoted to the purſuit, and ſpent in the various entertainments of *ſenſible pleaſure*; as if they thought (and perhaps ſome of them do) that

their ſupreme happineſs conſiſted in it. But this a prudent Chriſtian will not do; for he knows we are already too much in love with ſenſible pleaſure, the great diſeaſe of our nature, and therefore will not by indulging it inflame a paſſion which is already too violent. * He finds that as the more we abſtain from theſe pleaſures, the more cold we grow to them, ſo by indulgence our appetite acquires a new edge, and grows the more ſharp and keen: he that drinks of this water ſhall not only thirſt again, but the more he drinks, he ſhall thirſt the more. He conſiders likewiſe, how entirely different from theſe, are the intellectual pleaſures of heaven, and how apt the love of them is to indiſpoſe us for theſe, and in this ſenſe *to alienate us from the life of God.* He is therefore ſo far from feaſting his ſenſes (as the manner of the world is) by all the variety of ſtudied entertainments, that he endeavours by all manner of ways to mortify them, and inſtead of ſetting up for a ſoft, voluptuous life (according to St. *Paul*'s advice to *Timothy*) *inures himſelf to hardſhips, as a good ſoldier of Jeſus Chriſt:* Not indeed by any ſuch rigid auſterities, as would deſtroy or impair his health, but by ſuch a ſparing uſe of, and well-governed abſtemiouſneſs from, even thoſe pleaſures which are lawful in themſelves, as may deaden his love to them, and make him more indifferent to the enjoyment of them.

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4. He will likewiſe keep a ſtrict guard over his ſenſes themſelves; as knowing they are the inlets of temptation, the landing ports of our ſpiritual enemies, and the feeble parts of our nature, which expoſe us to continual danger. Particularly, what can be more dangerous than an unguarded eye or ear, while there is every day ſo much to be ſeen and to be heard, to provoke to wickedneſs, and ſo little to encourage holineſs? Over theſe therefore he keeps a conſtant guard, to prevent invaſion and ſurprize, eſpecially over the eye, the moſt dangerous of the two, as being concerned with more objects: praying alſo to God, without whoſe keeping the city the watchman waketh but in vain, *To turn away his eyes leſt they behold vanity, and to quicken him in his way*; that nothing he ſees or hears in this his pilgrimage, may either turn him out of it, or hinder him in it.

* 5. We may, ſecondly obſerve, how a prudent Chriſtian purſues improvement by the government of his underſtanding. Conſidering, in the firſt place, what an excellent faculty and great endowment underſtanding is, and for what great ends it was given him by God, he thinks himſelf concerned not to let it lie idle, but to employ and improve it as much as poſſible, that he may hereafter give a good account of his talent: but were no account of it to be given, yet conſidering himſelf farther as a traveller in his way to his end, and his underſtanding as a

torch that is to light him in it, he would think it very proper to take care of it, and that not only to preſerve it from going out, but to feed it with ſuch ſupplies of oil, that it might ſhine the more brightly and clearly.

* 6. But yet as much as he is for improving his underſtanding, he does not affect univerſal knowledge, as well knowing the vanity of pretending to it, by one whoſe capacity is no greater and whoſe life is no longer. Neither is he for filling his head with little things, no nor with ſuch great things as do not conduce to his end, and whoſe impertinency to his buſineſs renders them as very trifles to him as the other. Nor will he apply himſelf to the ſtudy of vain and unprofitable ſciences, nor yet of ſuch theories as exceed the proportion of his underſtanding: but as he muſt be ignorant of many things, ſo he will not ſo much as endeavour to know ſuch as are not to be comprehended: indeed if God reveals them, he does not think their being above his underſtanding, any reaſon why they ſhould not be believed. But though he believes them, yet he can ſee no cauſe, to engage his thoughts, or employ his time in the ſearch and ſtudy of ſuch things, only to loſe himſelf in unfathomable depths, to the neglect of other matters which he can comprehend, and is more concerned ſo to do. And for the ſame cauſe he declines prying into the hidden ſcenes of providence, thoſe ſecret things that belong to God,

God, which though not abſolutely incomprehenſible in themſelves, yet being locked up in the womb of futurity, are by that wall of partition, as inacceſſible to us as the other.

* 7. The ſame wiſdom directs him not to ſtudy ſuch things as require great expence of time and labour to maſter them, unleſs they bring him in an advantage anſwerable to the time and pains which he beſtows upon them. For he has ſo little time, and ſo great an intereſt depending, he can't think it frugal to throw away a moment. Upon the ſame ground he does not regard what in reputation, and in the vogue of the world paſſes for learning, but what is true and real knowledge, and fit to perfect the mind of man. And even in purſuing this he is on his guard, not ſuffering himſelf to be tranſported by an immoderate thirſt of it: but as his enquiries into truth are modeſt, ſo he is diſcreet and ſelect in making them, applying himſelf to thoſe moſt which are of greateſt importance, moſt ſerviceable to his moral conduct; eſpecially to the knowledge of God and of himſelf, wherein is contained the ſum of human wiſdom.

* 8. In all his ſtudies he takes care to avoid the two great diſorders incident to ſtudious men, curioſity and vain-glory: curioſity, which puts them upon uſeleſs enquiries, only to pleaſe themſelves; and vain-glory, which puts them

on many dry and insipid studies, only to please and procure the admiration of others. Nor does he make any knowledge an end, but refers all to the great ends of virtue and happiness: in all his intellectual applications making this his one care, to love God, and to be loved by him.

9. After the regulation of his understanding, the next work of a prudent Christian is, the government of his will and affections. These of themselves are in the utmost disorder, caused by the general corruption of our nature: and unless this is removed, no man can be either good, or happy hereafter.

10. His first step towards this, is to teach his will to follow in all things, not natural inclination, but the will of God revealed to us in his word: for the will of God sways more with a prudent Christian than any inclination of his own, which he is ready at all times, and in all cases, to sacrifice to his duty; and his only care is to conform his will to the will and word of God, as knowing that God, being infinitely wise as well as good, cannot possibly command any thing, but what, upon the whole account, it is best for him to do. Most chearfully therefore does he depose his own will from the throne, and sets up the will of God.

* 11. Nor is he less obedient to a *providential* than to the *written* will of God. Not adhering

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to any private fancies, opinions or wiſhes of his own, he abſolutely refers himſelf to God, to his gracious and all-wiſe diſpoſal. He lodges all his concerns in his hands, and is willing he ſhould chuſe for him; and when he does ſo, concluding it beſt that things ſhould be as the Governor of the world would have them, he thankfully accepts his choice, and humbly acquieſces in the wiſdom of his providence: and accordingly, inſtead of cheriſhing any thought, or uſing any language of diſcontent, he is in all things ready to ſay with his Lord, *Not as I will, but as thou wilt.* Lord, thy will was an innocent will, and yet thou didſt reſign it. How much more ſhould we reſign our perverſe and corrupt wills?

CHAP. V.

A perſuaſive to the ſtudy of Chriſtian prudence, with ſome advices relating to the practice of it.

1. HAVING thus laid down the principles of Chriſtian prudence, what remains but to perſuade men to the ſtudy of it? And the firſt conſideration I ſhall offer to recommend the ſtudy of this wiſdom is, that it is attainable. * Many things employ the ſearch of ſtudious men, which, after all, they can never maſter,

but *muſt* ſit down, if not with a *contented*, yet with an *unavoidable* ignorance of. But it is not ſo with wiſdom: the acquiſition of this depends not upon great parts, but upon a willing mind. Speculation indeed is infinite, and the well of truth has no bottom, and beſides, *Many have nothing to draw with.* But wiſdom, like a fountain, lies open, and within common reach. Some care, and pains, and diligence only it takes to drink of it; an eaſy price for ſo precious a treaſure. Now this certainty of ſucceſs is an encouraging motive to ſearch after it in good earneſt. Men may ſeek for ſilver, and not find it, and ſearch for hid treaſures, without being able to break in upon their dark retirements. And yet they ſearch on: how much more ſhould we ſearch for wiſdom, when we are ſure not to be diſappointed in our ſearch?

2. But may we not be ſo in our *finding?* Many things are attainable by our labour, which are not worth our labour to attain. But wiſdom is not of thoſe; on the contrary, nothing is ſo well worth attaining. Wiſdom it is that keeps the world in order, and makes living in it a bleſſing, that is the parent of laws, the foundation of government, and the great upholder and ſweetner of all ſociety. Wiſdom it is that teaches a man how to obey, and how to govern even that ungovernable creature himſelf: to moderate

derate his paſſions, to compoſe his manners, to behave well in all circumſtances of life. In a word, that teaches a man to know God and himſelf, and by the ſhining paths of virtue leads him to everlaſting glory and happineſs.

* 3. Therefore it is that *Solomon* exhorts us with ſo paſſionate an earneſtneſs, *with all thy gettings, get wiſdom.* As much as to ſay, whatever thou getteſt, or with the expence of all thou haſt gotten, get wiſdom, as being of infinitely more value than all. It is a pearl of ſo great price, that the merchant who finds it, will buy it with the price of all that he has. And a wiſe merchant he is who buys it even at this price, for it can never be bought too dear. Honour and greatneſs may; nay, and ſo may the whole world, if the price be a man's ſoul. But wiſdom cannot; therefore again, *Get wiſdom, and with all thy gettings, get underſtanding.* If we get wiſdom 'tis no matter what elſe we loſe. And if we loſe it, 'tis no matter what elſe we get. And indeed it matters not what we get or loſe, ſo we get that which directs us in the way to happineſs, which giveth *life* to them that have it, and teaches them how to *live.*

* 4. Another conſideration to perſuade us to the ſerious ſtudy of wiſdom, is this, that if we do not now apply ourſelves to it, we ſhall here-

after earneſtly wiſh we had. I know hardly any other ſtudy, the neglect of which we ſhall finally repent of. He that has not ſtudied mathematics, ſuppoſe, though he may perhaps ſometime while he lives, reflect upon himſelf with ſome blame for the neglect of ſuch an accompliſhment, yet when he comes toward the concluding ſcene of life, and that of eternity begins to open, I preſume he will not then think this a neglect worth repenting of. And ſo as to other ſtudies. But he who has not ſtudied wiſdom, will then moſt certainly wiſh he had, and think it the greateſt gain, could he exchange all the ſciences he is maſter of, for this one, the ſcience of life. This is the ſcience that receives our laſt and beſt approbation, when other things that make a greater ſhew and noiſe, and which perhaps we liked better when we knew leſs, do not find ſo great a ſhare in our eſteem. Uſeleſs notions, and new ſyſtems, and fine-ſpun theories, will not always pleaſe us. The days will come when we ſhall ſay, we have no pleaſure in them. But wiſdom will reliſh with us to the very laſt, and more at laſt than ever. When other things leave us, wiſdom will ſtay behind, and more than ſupply their loſs: and when we have outlived the pleaſures of the world, then will it be in the greateſt eſteem with us, as being the only thing of all our acquirements, whoſe poſſeſſion and enjoyment too is immortal.

5. When

5. When the gaities and follies of life are over (for folly will not always pleaſe) when even the more ſerious entertainments of manhood appear to us as more folemn titles; when covetouſnefs itſelf, the laſt folly that forſakes us, becauſe it begins ſo late, that it often ſettles upon the dregs of life, as upon a firm and immoveable ground, when even this cleaving folly, ſhall uncling and drop from us, when the world itſelf ſhall be a burden to us; then ſhall the remembrance of wiſdom be ſweet unto us, and we ſhall delight in her converſation, and every ſtep in her ways will give us more comfort than all the little things of the world. Thoſe who have been ſtrangers to wiſdom before, will be ready enough to claim acquaintance with her then and to ſay unto wiſdom, *Thou art my ſiſter, and to call underſtanding their kinſwoman.* But ſhe will not then be ſo forward to *own them.* And therefore happy is he that has contracted a friendſhip with her in the days of his youth and ſtrength, that he may not be diſowned by her in that hour wherein he moſt wants her favour: that he may not have wiſdom then to learn, when he ſhould be actually wiſe, and have the benefit and comfort of her light to guide him through the vale of the ſhadow of death. In order to which we ſhould always remember that excellent advice of St. *Bernard, To rejoice in thoſe things when we are young, which we ſhall not repent of when we are old.*

6. I have now only to add a few prudential advices relating to the practice of a Chriſtian life. Of which the firſt ſhall be that of the apoſtle, *To walk circumſpectly*, that is warily and heedfully, with all poſſible care, caution and exactneſs. This is ſuch walking as ſhews we are duly apprehenſive of our condition: the danger of which muſt be allowed to be exceeding great, ſince beſides our own corrupt nature, and the wickedneſs of the world that ſurrounds us, we have the prince of darkneſs for our profeſt enemy; *even our adverſary the devil, who as a roaring lion walketh about, ſeeking whom he may devour.* He does not tarry 'till the prey comes in his way, but ſeeks after it, but walks about ſeeking who is fit to be made a prey of; whoſe idleneſs or whoſe buſineſs, whoſe temper or conſtitution, whoſe age or whoſe careleſneſs may give him any advantage. He begins with us very early, laying his ſiege againſt us in our very infancy. Then he tempts us with ſenſible objects, and eaſily increaſes our natural propenſion to them. For reaſon is then in a dead ſleep, and ſenſe altogether awake, being in its greateſt perfection, by reaſon of the fineneſs of the blood and ſpirits, and the tenderneſs of the parts, which eaſily yielding to the impreſſion of ſenſible objects, endear them more and more to us, and ſo confirm that *friendſhip with the world, which is enmity with* God. This thoughtleſs age is ſucceeded by childhood and youth;

youth; and then indeed reaſon begins to awake; but ſo ſlowly, that we are all this time, as it were, between ſleeping and waking; the weight ſtill hangs upon our temples. Our paſſions are much too ſtrong for our weak reaſon to govern, which accordingly our enemy makes his advantage of, and tempts us with the baits of ſenſuality, with thoſe *youthful luſts* which 'tis then hard to fly. This boiſterous ſeaſon alſo blows over, and is followed by manhood. And now indeed reaſon is ſtronger and paſſion cooler, and ſo the devil changes his former bait for that of pride and ambition, whereby himſelf fell, and wherewith he aſſaulted even the Son of God. Now he lifts us up to, and ſhews us the grandeur and glory of the world, and tries to perſuade us what a happineſs it would be, could we make a part of that glittering ſcene. Well, but neither will this laſt always; our ſun ſoon begins to decline, and old age comes on, the winter of our year, or rather the evening of our ſhort day. And now our reaſon grows heavy and ſleepy again, and our paſſions alſo flag with it, hang their wings, and make our flight nearer the earth, as not being able to bear up in the higher regions. We are now no longer fit for our former entertainments, and having ſeen what little dependance there is on the world, having loſt ſome of our friends, and proved the inſincerity of others, this experience, together with the natural ſinking of our ſpirits, makes

makes us grow timorous, jealous and diſtruſtful, and ſollicitous to ſecure ourſelves in this forlorn ſtate, and ſo we ſtand fairly diſpoſed for covetouſneſs. And accordingly the devil now draws us into this ſnare, which reigns the more abſolute over us, as having us almoſt entirely to itſelf, without competition from other vices. Thus our adverſary is always intent upon our ruin, meeting us at every turn of our lives, and ſuiting his temptations to the ſeveral ſtates and conditions of them. And therefore it highly concerns us to walk circumſpectly, as knowing both the infinite worth of our ſouls, and the numberleſs hazards they are expoſed to, from which (next to the grace of God) nothing but an extraordinary caution can ſecure them.

7. And becauſe theſe hazards are chiefly from ſenſible objects, my next advice ſhall be, *To walk by faith, not by ſight*; to order your converſation not by what you ſee of this world, but by what you believe of the next. *Not to look at the things which are ſeen, but at things that are not ſeen*; *becauſe the things that are ſeen are temporal*, and ſo do not affect our final ſtate: *but the things that are not ſeen are eternal*, and ſo the proper objects of an happineſs that is never to expire. A Chriſtian then ought to keep his eye always fixed on his happineſs; to walk continually in view of this his end, and have it before him as near as

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he can, in every action and word, in every deliberate ſtep of his Chriſtian progreſs: not to content himſelf with having referred all he does to it once in general; but to renew and repeat the propoſal of it, as often as conveniently he can. Beſide the habitual reference of his actions to their end, let every prudent Chriſtian be more and more diligent to have an actual regard to it, as far as is poſſible, in every ſtep of his life. For the having before us that eternal weight of glory, that crown that fadeth not away, muſt needs quicken our devotion and inflame our zeal, and inſpirit us with new life and vigour in the running our Chriſtian courſe, and help us with eaſe to overcome all thoſe vain impediments, which the world, the fleſh and the devil throw in our way. Nothing ſhall be able to ſeparate us from our end, or turn us out of the right way to it, if we keep our eye intent upon it, and have it in our view all the way of our Chriſtian walk. For indeed the excellence of it is ſo tranſcendent, that nothing of this world can ſtand together with it, or ſhine in its light, any more than a feeble ſtar can ſhine in the preſence of the mid-day ſun. The greater light ſwallows up the leſs; we muſt loſe the one before we can be dazzled with the other; we muſt intermit the view of our chief good, before any other can appear conſiderable enough to tempt us.

9. And now we are got into the right way, there

there is no better means of fixing ourſelves there, than to keep toward the middle of it, pretty far within the lines, ſo as not to tread upon the edges: not to go to the outſide of what is lawful, but rather to ſet ourſelves in all our actions at the greateſt diſtance from ſin, by abſtaining from all the appearances and beginnings of it. But chiefly from the beginnings. The full accompliſhments of wickedneſs we have a horror of. But we have not the ſame dread of the beginnings, and of the things that have a tendency to groſs crimes. So we are eaſily perſuaded to begin; and when we have once made an entrance, the progreſs grows eaſier and eaſier. For the next degree being but a degree beyond it, carries as little horror in it as the firſt; and ſo the next to that, being a degree farther, carries the like appearance: and ſo the reſt that follow, we meaſuring every degree not (as we ſhould do) by all the preceding ones which it contains, but only by the laſt, which it immediately exceeds, conſidering it only as a degree farther than that, and ſo as a ſmall thing, till by degrees we ſlide unawares into the commiſſion of thoſe ſins, which looked frightful, and would have *choaked* us in the lump, but being thus taken by *piece-meal* are eaſily ſwallowed.

* 10. And no wonder, ſince the firſt liberties we take, the firſt approaches we make to any ſin, inflame our paſſions, raiſe our appetites, which were before quiet, and increaſe our deſires of the forbidden

forbidden object. So that our task is now harder than it was at first, and we might much easier have forborn the whole, beginning and all, than forbear making a further progress, when we have once begun. And why should we make our duty more difficult and painful than it is? Therefore the wisest way is, not to begin; that being true of all sin, which *Solomon* observes of strife, *The beginning of it is as when one letteth out water*, which is easily prevented from running at first, but being once let out, the passage grows more open, and the stream more difficult to command. Therefore, says he, *Leave off contention before it be meddled with, i. e.* Do not meddle with it at all, it being much easier to have nothing to do with it, than to govern yourself in it. They that once begin, are insensibly carried to do what at first they never designed, and then vainly complain, that God did not preserve them from falling, when they placed their own feet on slippery ground.

11. To conclude: if we will be truly wise, let us set the gospel and example of Christ before us, and endeavour to be as wise in our generation, as the men of this world are in theirs, to be as diligent in pursuing our true and great end, as they are in pursuing their false and little ones. They are intent upon the *present*, and sollicitous to provide for the short *future* of an uncertain life. Let us be intent upon providing for that future life, which will soon be present, and never

ver paſt. For this purpoſe we ſhould retire as much as we can conveniently from the world, and have as little to do with it; we ſhould lay aſide every weight, and every incumbrance, and not be *troubled about many things*, that we may the more quietly and entirely attend upon the one thing needful. Not that I plead for a hermit's ſolitude, not underſtanding the agreement of ſuch a ſtate with human nature, nor what authority men have thus to bury themſelves alive, and to excommunicate themſelves from human ſociety. But ſo much of ſolitude as diſengages us from the affairs and incumbrances of the world, and places us out of the noiſe, hurry and buſtle of it, and out of the way of its temptations, muſt certainly be of vaſtly great advantage to a truly Chriſtian life. Being much abroad may teach us to know *the world*; but retirement only can teach us to know *ourſelves*. For to know ourſelves, we muſt converſe much with ourſelves. Let us therefore *retire*, and when we are alone, let us remember, that we are not alone, for God is with us. And while we think and act as in his preſence, ſolitude has all the ſafety of company, without the temptations and interruptions. And here let us think much of eternity, and of our nearneſs to it, of the future judgment, and the two final ſentences of that day, of the glorious things that are ſpoken of the city of God, and the unſpeakable miſery of being for ever baniſhed from

from his presence; and lastly, of the thoughts which we shall have of all these things when we come to die. Every man is wise *then*, and has a right sense of things; let us endeavour to have the same *now*, as we shall then wish we had, which is the sum of all Christian prudence.

NICODEMUS:

NICODEMUS:

Or, A TREATISE on the FEAR of MAN.

Written in *German* by *Auguſtus Herman Franck.*

To all miniſters and teachers in churches and ſchools, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *in the fellowſhip of the* Holy Ghoſt:

Dearly beloved brethren,

GIVE me leave, who am the leaſt of all the ſervants of Jeſus Chriſt, for the love wherewith God hath loved us in his Son, to dedicate to you the following treatiſe. For though I be the meaneſt member in the ſpiritual body of Chriſt, (if ſo much may be allowed me) yet am I thereby made partaker of the life, ſpirit, and power reſiding in him as our ever-bleſſed head. If there be any thing herein conformable to the mind of our great Shepherd, and proceeding from the energy of his Spirit, why ſhould it not be readily received;

received; and if, after a true ſpiritual trial thereof, you find any thing faulty or imperfect, commend it to the mercy of our great Shepherd, to correct in me, by the gracious influence of his Spirit.

I do not offer this as a piece of great learning. Indeed, the plain truth of my God, ſet forth in its natural luſtre, and the leaſt communication of his power affecting the heart, is infinitely more valuable to me, than all the learning of this world. And my only boaſting in the Lord is this, that I have betaken myſelf to that ſchool wherein the higheſt wiſdom is; to know Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified. And though I, who have ſcarce learned the firſt elements thereof, have the boldneſs to repeat this my leſſon in the hearing of all, yet ought it not to be deemed an effect of pride; but the love of my neighbour conſtraineth me.

My ſoul hath been many times grieved at the apparent corruption, as of men in general, ſo of our order in particular; and more eſpecially when I ſaw that the fear of man is become the epidemical diſtemper of our teachers. When I reflect on the one hand, with what ſpirit, with what joy, with what undaunted courage and boldneſs the antient ſervants of God ſet aſide all regard of man, and delivered as the ambaſſadors of the Lord, their meſſage fully and plainly, tho' it expoſed them to the evident hazard of their lives; and on the other, how gently and ſoftly we

we go about it now, and how little we manifeſt the truth to the conſcience of every man: when I, moreover, conſider, how much they ſuffered with Chriſt their Lord, for the ſake of their teſtimony; and how the moſt of us take care to preach ſo ſmoothly, as not to incur the leaſt ſhadow of their ſufferings, the difference between us and them appeared ſo exceeding great, that I could not but be aſtoniſhed at it.

Brethren, I ſpeak with plainneſs and ſimplicity. When our Lord and Maſter was in the world, he was ſo far from deſiring the riches, honours, or pleaſures of it, that he was indeed the pooreſt and moſt deſpiſed among men; entirely ſpending all the days of his humiliation, in procuring our ſalvation. And 'tis he that tells us, *Whoſoever doth not bear his croſs and come after me, cannot be my diſciple.* We therefore ought to be ſo many ſhining lights, by our hearty denial of all the riches, honours, and pleaſures of this world; and by employing our lives entirely, in the aſſiſtance of our neighbours. But, if, on the contrary, we ſeek worldly things, then we depart from our glorious pattern; neither is there any thing that doth more effectually deprive us of the bleſſing of God upon our calling. For ſure it is, the more we are concerned for honour, profit, or eaſe, the leſs ſhall we be concerned to promote the good of our neighbour. And as long as our minds are not wholly conformable to the mind of our great Shepherd, it is impoſſible he

ſhould

ſhould be well pleaſed with us; for *he trieth the hearts and reins.* On the contrary, did we deſire nothing in the world, we ſhould not fear it.

* Did we duly conſider, that there is a day before us, when we muſt give account to the great Biſhop of our ſouls, whether, according to his example, we have had nothing elſe in our eye but the ſalvation of mankind; ſhould we not apply ourſelves to our duty with another kind of fervour than we have hitherto done? Should we not more effectually clear ourſelves from all ſuſpicion of either fearing or deſiring any thing in this world? Should we not be more earneſt to admoniſh every one in particular? Should we not wreſtle more in our prayers for them? Should we not, as ſoon as any good deſire appeared in any, more readily lend him our helping hand, that the ſpark of grace might be blown up into a flame? Should not our outward converſation be more holy, and conſequently more edifying? Verily, my brethren, I fear we have reaſon to be aſhamed, when we read what one ſaith, "A Chriſtian ought to be ſo enkindled "and all-flaming with divine love, and, both "inwardly and outwardly, ſo conformable to "God, that whenever any one came to him, he "might hear nothing from him but God: and "his heart and mind ought to be fixed on him by "burning love, and ſo be ready in all things faithfully to obey his will, that ſuch as viſited him,

"though

" though with cold and lukewarm hearts, might " be heated, and ſet on-fire by him: as we ſee " cold and dead coals are kindled, when they are " put to glowing ones."

I have opened my mouth, my brethren, and addreſt you with the ſimplicity of a child, and am very willing to appear mean in your eyes; only deſpiſe not the truth, which is not mine, but my Lord's and Saviour's. I am not aſhamed to acknowledge, that *I count not myſelf to have apprehended, or to be already perfect.* But this I ſay, (my conſcience bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt, which alſo the righteous Judge will teſtify for me at the great day) that ſince I have found grace in the eyes of my Lord to perceive my own miſery, and the narrow way to eſcape from it, all my thoughts and endeavours have been bent, in the faithfulneſs of my heart, to continue therein, to purſue it more eagerly day by day, and, as far as poſſible, to direct all men to it. I neither deſpiſe nor envy any of you that are of the ſame function with me. Nay, I know many among you to whom I think myſelf unworthy to do the meaneſt ſervice. But I know many likewiſe, whoſe converſation is not at all conformable to the pattern Chriſt hath ſet us. And for theſe I heartily pray, that God would ſhew them the things that belong to their everlaſting peace. Neither is my heart in the leaſt incenſed againſt them that moſt unjuſtly ſlander and reproach me: but I compaſſionate them, ſince we muſt all one

day

day appear before the ſame judge. For my part, I cannot call black white; nor take him for a follower of Chriſt, and a pattern of his flock, in whom I find nothing of the mind that was in Chriſt.

If any thing hath been vouchſafed to me, it is this, (wherein I heartily rejoice) that I have been made, tho' in a very low degree, partaker of the ſufferings of Chriſt. And it is the greateſt comfort to me, that the men of this world ſpeak all manner of evil of me falſly, loading me with cenſures and accuſations, the groundleſſneſs whereof the Lord will diſcover at that day.

* Let us all, my brethren, think of this great day, and ſo even our accounts againſt it, that we may then appear with joy and confidence: let us caſt away all care, but this only. Let us drop all unprofitable conteſt; and, with united hands, carry on the work of the Lord, being heartily glad to ſee his glory advanced, be it by ourſelves or others. And I beſeech God, from the bottom of my heart, to influence you all with a rich meaſure of his holy Spirit, to ſanctify you to himſelf, and to pour his tranſcendent bleſſing upon all your planting and watering. The ſpirit of love and of truth keep all your hearts, and lead them into the fellowſhip of Jeſus Chriſt, who alone is able to give that true peace, which the world cannot give.

Oct. 26, 1731. AUGUST. HERM. FRANCK.

CHAP. I.

Of the nature and cauſes of the fear of man.

1. THE fear of man, in things pertaining to God, is a moſt heinous vice, and a kind of idolatry, whereby we think, ſpeak, or do ſome evil, or decline thinking, ſpeaking, or doing ſome good, out of ſome ſort of conſideration of men, or apprehenſion of their diſpleaſure. Now the more there is of this fear ſtill cleaving to believers, the more dangerous is the condition of their ſouls.

The cauſes hereof are either internal or external. The internal are chiefly theſe:

1. Unbelief, which is the root of all vices.

2. The love of the world, and the things of the world, and the want of ſelf-denial; which makes us fear men would prejudice us in our reputation, eſtate, or eaſe, if we ſimply followed the word of God.

3. Falſe humility, which is ſwayed more by the authority of men, than by the word of God, and prompts us to refer all things to the judgment of others, as underſtanding them better than ourſelves.

4. An eager deſire of viſible ſucceſs in all our undertakings; whereas we ought to reſt ſatisfied with an inward victory; that is, with having kept a good conſcience toward God.

5. Want

5. Want of experience in the ways of God, which makes us hesitate in difficult cases, and indispose the soul to rely upon God, fearing lest he should let us fail or miscarry in them, or that it would be presumption and tempting of God, to cast ourselves wholly upon him. This proceeds from our not having sufficiently learned, how dear they are to God that entirely trust in him: and what powerful assistance he affords, to accomplish his own work in them.

6. Neglect of prayer, which not only prevents our obtaining a full conquest over the fear of man, but likewise drives us down further into the stream of hypocrisy.

The external causes are chiefly these:

1. The tyranny of men in power, who, under pretence of preserving the public peace, fetter the consciences both of teachers and hearers.

* 2. The forwardness of our universities in dubbing of heretics: for they no sooner perceive any breakings forth of true Christianity, but they are sure, out of their great zeal, to cast a slur upon it, by giving it an ill name.

3. The examples and specious reasonings of those, who are bound down by the fear of man.

4. Wife and children, that by their importunate way of arguing and unbelieving tattle and clamour, weary out, and overcome many.

5. The esteem we have already gained in the world. Those especially who are in any eminent post, find it hard to give up their darling re-

putation, and suffer reproach with the people of God.

6. Intimacy with the children of this world, particularly with the great and honourable men, who, under pretence of hearty love and kindness, are always cautioning us not to venture too far.

* Lastly, The neglect of frequent conversation with true believers, who walk in the power of faith.

CHAP. II.

Of the signs and effects of the fear of man.

1. A Fearful man is not easily convinced of the truth, and tho' it be laid before him with the clearest evidence, yet he starts many doubts and scruples about it, lest, if he should confess it too roundly, he should be hated, persecuted, or reputed a heretic.

2. He is never so busy in starting objections, as in cases that most tend to the glory of God.

* 3. When he is convinced of the truth, he will not confess it before men; or if he do, 'tis only among the lovers of truth. But before the enemies thereof, he conceals or denies it, or talks so dubiously about it, as to leave them uncertain whether he believes it or no; at least he takes care so to order his words, as to be able always to give them a handsome turn, and so be able to come

come off without trouble. If he lives in a place where truth is profeſſed, he owns it open mouth'd; but if he comes to another place, he finds many difficulties in the point, ſo that he reſolves to halt between both, and leave it undetermined.

4. When he finds he cannot avoid owning the truth, yet he takes care ſo to limit and pinch it, that it may appear tolerable even to the enemies of truth.

5. A fearful man will at leaſt break out into an avowed confeſſion of truth; but it is when he finds himſelf well backed with human authority; that is, when a perſon of unſpotted reputation, and great learning, hath aſſerted the ſame before him. Accordingly he is more careful to arm himſelf with a fine train of human teſtimonies, than with the word of God itſelf; and thinks he has a right ſo to do, becauſe he ſees that the chearful confeſſors of truth have ſometimes ſtopped the the mouths of their ſhameleſs adverſaries with ſuch arguments.

6. When ſome good work is to be done, he doth not undertake it with a ſimple reliance on the living God: but when he finds good patrons on his ſide, he at laſt ſets about it. Yet when he ſees the ſtorm ariſe, and the waves beat, he gives way and ſo loſes all he had gained.

7. He always finds ſomething to blame in the behaviour of faithful labourers. Sometimes he fears they go too far. Sometimes, finding nothing to tax in the thing itſelf, he blames the man-

ner of doing it. When he finds nothing elſe to cavil at, he cries, the work is not well timed: thus he always ſees ſome fault; tho', indeed, there is none but his own want of faith.

8. He is very apt to believe any falſe reports againſt the faithful children of God; and, becauſe his own heart fails, he is very forward in warning them to take heed to themſelves; thus by his prudence, damping and ſtifling the chearfulneſs of their faith.

9. He does not love that a miniſter ſhould make too plain and particular an application of his ſermons, or ſhew too great earneſtneſs in his function, or profeſſion of Chriſtianity.

10. A fearful man is eaſily moved to envy; eſpecially when he ſees thoſe that are young acting chearfully in faith; and cries, "That is none "of his buſineſs, but muſt be left to thoſe of "more knowledge and experience."

11. He either himſelf expoſes as preſumptuous, ſtubborn, ſelf-conceited, proud and phariſaical, thoſe who, with a free and child-like ſpirit, break thro' all oppoſition: or, at leaſt, ſits on the bench when they are thus condemned, and conſents to the unjuſt ſentence pronounced againſt them.

12. A fearful miniſter reproves common people boldly; but when he is to ſpeak to great and honourable perſons, his mouth is gagged.

* 13. The pulpit is a fearful preacher's ſtrong hold; but when he is to ſpeak face to face, and

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to bear witneſs to the truth, by ſaying, *Thou art the man*; then he is very ſupple and complaiſant.

14. When he hears prophane, looſe, or fooliſh men talking, he holds his tongue; and when it comes from great men, he graces it with a ſmile.

15. Above all things, a fearful man, cannot abide to be ſingular.

16. Sometimes he deſires to do ſomething to the glory of God; but he ſoon confronts the thought with "What will people ſay?" And then fairly drops it.

17. He cautiouſly ſhuns frequent and familiar converſation with the members of Chriſt that are deſpiſed by the world. Or, if he be willing to converſe with them by night and in ſecret, yet he cares not to appear with them in public. He rather appoints ſome certain place to meet them, where it may not be taken notice of.

18. A fearful preacher makes it his buſineſs in his public diſcourſes, to bring in ſomething againſt enthuſiaſm and fanaticiſm; and then he thinks he may venture to ſpeak the truth; which is true enough. For the world takes it for granted, that he means it as they apprehend it, that is, as ſpoken againſt thoſe on whom they falſely beſtow thoſe names.

19. A fearful man rejoiceth for a time, while the light of truth ſhines upon him; but as ſoon as he is called to account for it, he is ſore afraid,

makes many excuſes, and by all manner of ſhifts and evaſions, endeavours to extricate himſelf, and to get rid of the ſuſpicion of it.

20. Inſtead of reproving his neighbour, he ſays, "God is ſo merciful, that he does not "doubt but he will himſelf reclaim him in due "time."

21. When he is to preſs the inward truth of Chriſtianity, he ſays, "It is too high for "them:" if he is to enforce any thing of outward behaviour, he accounts it a little thing; or elſe ſays, "We muſt not begin at outward "things."

CHAP. III.

Of the miſchiefs cauſed by the fear of man.

1. MANY thouſands of ſouls are thereby kept back from a true converſion: becauſe they dare not ſuffer the knowledge of the truth to ſhine upon them in its full ſtrength, but hold it impriſoned, as it were, by manifold ſhifts and pretences.

2. Many who are already converted are hereby hindered from growth in holineſs, as they deprive themſelves of many opportunities (which they greatly need) to ſtrengthen and edify themſelves in God; for this fear makes them avoid the

the converſation of thoſe who are moſt able to build them up in the faith, and run into many other ſins againſt the dictates of their own conſcience.

Again, as a free and ready confeſſion of the truth, highly advances a man in faith and love; ſo the denying or hiding it, keeps him quite down, and hinders him from attaining the power of the ſpirit. Many know not what the reaſon is, why they advance ſo ſlowly in ſpiritual growth. It is plainly this, the fear of man lurking within, eats the vigour and activity of the life of grace. God, 'tis certain, does infinitely abound in mercy, and would willingly every day pour out new bleſſings upon us. But a fearful man is not receptive of them. He doth not act in ſingleneſs of heart. He dares not truſt God, and God therefore cannot fill him with the fulneſs of his graces.

3. When miniſters in particular, are unable to overcome the fear of man, they grow dejected and heartleſs in the diſcharge of their function, and ſcarce know themſelves what or how they ought to ſpeak. They become liſtleſs in all their performances: ſo that the moſt excellent gifts which God has beſtowed upon them, become altogether fruitleſs; and what good might have been done is either never attempted, or left unfiniſhed. Indeed it cannot be expected that any one enſlaved to this fear, ſhould ever, by his

cold endeavours, throughly reform any abuſe of long continuance. The fear of man is always for maintaining old cuſtoms: and while every one is afraid of innovation, abuſes are authorized more and more, and all things proceed from bad to worſe.

And though there were two or more ſuch miniſters in the ſame place, they will perform nothing worthy of their calling; nay the one hindereth the other from the faithful diſcharge of his paſtoral duty: yea, it would be better for many to have for their fellow-labourer, one that was openly wicked, who might perhaps, by his enormities, more readily force the truth from them, than a timorous *Nicodemus*, who by ſhunning it himſelf, teaches them to ſhun the light.

And ſuch as the miniſter is, ſuch are commonly the hearers. If he therefore be afraid, how will his hearers be ever excited to a true chearfulneſs of faith? And thoſe of them, who, by the grace of God, are freed from this baſe bondage, can never have any confidence in their teacher, till he is diſengaged from that ſervile ſpirit. Many miniſters wonder why the true children of God have ſo little confidence in them: not conſidering this plain reaſon of it, that their flock never ſaw in them the leaſt proof of a good ſhepherd, who readily expoſes himſelf to any ſufferings, yea, *lays down his life for his ſheep.*

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Such ſervants as theſe God will not fail in due time, to crown with ſucceſs. He will manifeſt his glory in them, and make bare his arm before them. But there is nothing of all this, where unbelief has gained admittance, and where the honour due to God from and before all men is not undauntedly rendered to him. For a fearful man truſts God no farther than his own poor reaſon carries him. When any thing croſſes that, he preſently giveth way; and therefore wanting the courage of a lively faith, he can never behold the glory of God.

4. When the well-wiſhers to religion ſee thoſe who know the truth, or at leaſt ought to do ſo, backward in owning it, they are not a little encouraged to play the hypocrite themſelves, inſtead of freely and boldly avowing their maſter. And it often happens, that by the fearfulneſs of one eminent man thouſands are infected with the ſpirit of hypocriſy and diſſimulation.

5. On the other hand, when the adverſaries of the truth, ſee them that love it, ſhun the light, it ſtrengthens them in their bad cauſe; concluding, that if they were in the right, they would have no need to fear. And as, if you reſiſt the devil, he will flee from you; ſo the reverſe is full as true. The more you fear, and give way to the devil and his inſtruments, the more will they purſue and preſs upon you.

6. In a word, the fear of man is the general bane both of city and country. Our ſuperiors

would appoint good miniſters and magiſtrates; but they fear diſpleaſing this or the other man, or ſet of men. They who ſhould ſpeak when a wicked miniſter is ordained, or officer recommended, hold their hands through fear. In the courts of judicature, this fear prevents juſtice, condemns the innocent, clears the guilty, bereaves widows and orphans of their right, and leaves the injured and oppreſſed without remedy. And what does it profit a man who is himſelf a ſlave to this fear, that he is ſenſible of the general corruption? It only expoſes him to the more pain. Being unwilling to break either with the world or God, he is looked upon as an unfaithful ſteward by both; and he endures far more trouble and anxiety, than the breaking through with a ready preſence of faith would have coſt him. He finds no joyful, filial aſſurance in prayer. The word of God has no reliſh with him. He never attains to the true communion of ſaints; and when he ſhould comfort and ſtrengthen others, by exhorting them in the power of God, he rather drives them to fear, and quenches the Holy Spirit in them. Thus he goes on without any ſpiritual experience, contenting himſelf with the bare letter and ſhadows of Chriſtianity, and a few ſounding words; but being in the mean time void of ſoul and life, of ſpirit and power, and ſo falling at laſt into a ſtate of carnal ſecurity, he carries others alſo along with him, often

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to the utter denying the truth, and precipitating himself into final destruction.

CHAP. IV.

Of the excuses that are usually made for the fear of man.

AS soon as we begin with true humility to acknowledge the fear of man as a great and most heinous evil, and accordingly to watch and pray, and strive against it, there is hope we may overcome: but there are very few who will acknowledge it; the very most, when charged therewith, labour to hide it with various excuses; some of which are so specious, that they blind the eyes of many, so that they approve their conduct, and praise their saying.

1. "Should I act thus, I should soon be called "to an account for it?" Well; but should this hinder a faithful servant from executing his master's orders with all sincerity? "But I shall be "put to charges and trouble, nay perhaps be "turned out of my livelihood?" Perhaps not; God is well able to protect thee. But if trouble do overtake thee, still have faith in God, and thou shalt be no loser for his sake. God is a faithful Lord and Master. Be it only thy care

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to be a faithful servant. Whatever thou loseſt in his cauſe, he will reſtore it to thee an hundred fold. Happy art thou when thou ſuffereſt for conſcience ſake. Though man caſt thee off, God will take thee up. But if thou art unwilling to loſe thy place for the ſake of a good conſcience, it is plain thou ſerveſt thy belly, and not God.

2. "But I have a wife and children to take "care of." Hear then what thy Lord ſaith unto thee, "He that loveth father or mother, ſon "or daughter, more than me, is not worthy of "me." True it is, that he who provideth not for his own houſe, hath denied the faith, and is worſe than an Infidel. But God's honour muſt not ſuffer one jot under pretence of providing for thy family. Thou mayeſt not, on that pretence, go out of the way of the commandment, to the right hand or to the left. Thou muſt neither do leſs or more, than if thou hadſt none, only learn what that meaneth, *Seek ye the kingdom of God, and his righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added to you.*

* 3. "But we muſt not pull down ſufferings "upon our own heads, or wilfully run into "them:" Neither muſt thou be afraid of ſuffering: as long as this flinching from the croſs is in thee, thy faith is not right. When a good thing cannot be done without ſuffering, thou art abſolutely bound to take it up. 'Tis better

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to suffer all things, than to have an evil conscience. Trouble not thyself, but do thou heartily the will of God. He will not lay upon thee more than thou art able to bear. Thou representest things to thyself worse than indeed they are. Thou art afraid of men: but glorify the Lord God in thy heart, and they will be afraid of thee.

4. "Why, we do what we can." Thou canst not do any thing of thyself; Christ alone doth all that is good in and by thee. But who can boast that he does as much as the Spirit of Christ enables him to do? He that weighs all things well, must needs acknowledge, he cannot answer to God for the many things he hath omitted, which he might have overcome by the power of faith, and which will appear in judgment against him. At the beginning very little appears possible; but if we go on boldly relying upon God, we shall find ourselves supported in doing greater things, yea, able to do *all things through Christ who strengtheneth us*.

5. "If such as are leading men, who ought "to be foremost in all good undertakings, would "but break the ice, we would readily follow "them; but we don't care to be the first beginners, as if we were better than them." Do as a servant that carries the torch before his master, and yet does not think himself better than his master. The kingdom of God did not come first to the men of the first rank, or to them who made

made the greateſt figure in the world. When thou art to receive thy reward, wilt thou refuſe to receive it, till thy ſuperior be paid firſt? In the kingdom of God there muſt be no diſpute about precedency. Let not therefore the unbelief of others keep thee back in thy race; knowing this, that if thou art convinced of the truth, and yet acteſt not according to thy conviction, God will certainly puniſh thy diſobedience, though thou ſhouldſt appeal to the pope or emperor.

* 6. "But I am no miniſter, I have no bu-"ſineſs to take care of men's ſouls." No! Art thou not a Chriſtian (though not a miniſter) and is it not the buſineſs, the bounden duty of every Chriſtian, to endeavour to bring his neighbour back into the right way, whenever he ſees him wandering in vice and deluſion? Is not every Chriſtian one anointed with the Spirit of Chriſt; who, conſequently, is bound to tread in his ſteps, by making his whole life one continued endeavour to ſave all men from the wrath to come? Thou mayeſt not, indeed, take upon thee to adminiſter the ſacraments, to caſt out of the church, or receive the penitent into it again; theſe are the peculiar offices of thoſe who are ſo called of God as was *Aaron*: but thou muſt, at the peril of thy ſalvation, follow the example of Chriſt as well as they. Thou, as well as they, muſt obſerve the laws of God; eſpecially that of doing good unto all men. Spiritual good above

above all; since it is not to ministers alone, but to all men that he hath said, *Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him.*

* 7. "However we must use prudence." True; but there are two sorts of it: one, that is from above, the other from beneath. The former of these is unreproveable, and a most precious gift of the Most High. But that which is from beneath hath the appearance indeed of wisdom, but is earthly, sensual, devilish. Where the fear of the Lord is not continually before the eyes, there the foundation of it is already laid. Where faith is weak, there she raises herself; when love grows cold, then she is strong. She informs us how to please God, without displeasing the world; to follow Christ, and yet avoid the cross. As long as the kingdom of God consists in words only she cannot utter all that she has to say. But when it is to be demonstrated in power, then she has recourse to many evasions, and cautions others (out of hearty goodwill) not to venture too far. Then she jumbles light and darkness together; she shifts and turns every way to keep the cross from her shoulders. She swims with the stream, and cares not to converse with those who suffer reproach for Christ's sake. She keeps on indeed the appearance of godliness as long as possible, and yet holdeth her tongue where the children of God

are condemned; nay, sometimes joins in pronouncing their sentence. She does much evil that good may come of it. But who is able to describe all the face of this horrible monster, which is come up out of the bottomless pit? 'Tis true, we must use prudence; but consider well which sort of prudence thou wilt use. Yea, set thyself before this glass, thou mayest know by which of these thou hast squared thy life and actions hitherto.

* 8. "But we must stay a little; another time "may do better: we may do more good by a "little delay." Where has God given thee leave to delay till the next moment, what may be done at this? To let slip an opportunity, in order to reserve thyself for some more favourable time? St. *Paul* bids us *redeem the time*, or (more exactly according to the *Greek*) buy up every opportunity, *i. e.* lay hold of it, as soon as ever it offers. Reserving thyself for a more convenient season, proceeds purely from false prudence. This reserve accustoms thee to hypocrisy; it continually strengthens the fear from which it flows, and will hinder thee from ever meeting with an opportunity to exert the true power of faith.

9. "To undertake a thing, without being able "to effect it, does more hurt than good; there-"fore 'tis better not to begin." Thou dost well to compute the charge of building before thou beginnest

beginneſt to build the tower. But whence wilt thou procure the charge? From thy own ability? No; that never can reach it. Begin thy work with full reliance upon God, and draw thy ſupplies from almighty goodneſs and wiſdom; and, by this means, thou wilt be enabled to accompliſh, at his coſt, the work once begun.

* Or if God, for holy reaſons, ſhould not proſper thy endeavours, it will be a comfort to thee, that thou haſt done thy part; and thy conſcience will be more eaſy, than if thou hadſt diſtruſted God, and ſo never ſet about it. Perhaps he trieth thee hereby, and though it has not ſucceeded now, it may at another time. Perhaps thy very endeavours may ſtir up many to an imitation of thy zeal. But if thou ſhouldſt be diſappointed in all thy good purpoſes, ſhouldſt thou conclude, that thy work of love had been in vain? Examine thyſelf, whether thy deſire of open ſucceſs in all things, be not the effect of pride lurking within? Be thou ſatisfied with the inward victory, a true Chriſtian can never be deprived of; which conſiſts in thy continuing unwearied in the patience of hope.

10. "But we can't do all at once." Thou unprofitable ſervant, ſhouldſt thou therefore bury thy talent in a napkin, and do nothing at all? Thou knoweſt not what thou canſt do, or rather, what God can do by thee. If thou wilt but lay aſide the fear of man, and ſet out boldly in his ſtrength, God is able to do for and by thee exceeding

ceeding abundantly, above all that thou canſt aſk or think.

11. "However, we ought to go fair and ſoft-"ly to work, and to do what good we can, con-"ſiderately and by degrees." Ay, this is ſomething indeed,—If we could but perſuade the devil to go fair and ſoftly too! But alas! *he walketh about like a roaring lion, ſeeking whom he may devour.* What haſt thou then to do, but to *reſiſt him ſtedfaſt in the faith*, and to preſs on in the power of the Holy Ghoſt? The devil laughs at all thy fair and ſoftly: give him but time, and he will not loſe a moment. And the blood of thoſe whom thy ſoftlineſs hath deſtroyed, will God require at thy hands.

12. "But an edge too ſharp is eaſily turned." If thou wouldeſt infer hence, that we ſhould not contend earneſtly for the faith; that it is not always good to be zealouſly affected in a good thing; or that we may ſometimes hide our zeal, wink at the faults of our neighbours, or otherwiſe diſſemble with them: this is all falſe prudence; this is directly contrary to the croſs of Chriſt. It is but juſt that we ſhew love and meekneſs towards all men; eſpecially when we declare to them the overflowing kindneſs of God. But at the ſame time we muſt uſe all poſſible earneſtneſs, leſt our love be made a cloak for wickedneſs. And whenever we do not, unbelief and the fear of man are at the bottom of our hearts; how-

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ever we labour by these specious words to excuse our being neither hot nor cold.

13. "But it is visible what great disorders "arise when people are too forward." 'Tis very possible that young and unexperienced Christians, may at first make false steps. And this mote in their eye, you presently discern; nay, and perhaps triumph over them. Take heed to thyself: we ought to bear with the faults of beginners, with great gentleness and compassionate love: and if we think ourselves more knowing than they, to set them right in the spirit of meekness. But God looks not on things with thy eyes. There is a vast difference between one that is still spiritually dead, and one that has recovered life from God, tho' he is still weak and encompass'd with infirmity. Thou who art stronger, draw not back because he is weak. Break thou thyself thro' those impediments, which he could not: and shew others by thy example, how to serve God with more purity and wisdom.

14. "By too open a declaration, we may hinder "a great deal of good that otherwise might be "done; nay, over-turn all: whereas, by a pru- "dent concealing of ourselves, we may do a great "deal of service." This is nothing but another piece of false prudence: for tho' 'tis true that an understanding man finds a time for silence as well as for speaking; yet a true Christian ought to trust in God, that he will so far bless the good he aims at, as that no other good undertaking will be

hindered

hindered by it. If thou haſt not this ſtedfaſt confidence in God, the devil will be ſure to delude thee at pleaſure; always repreſenting ſuch phantoms, as will make thee let go what thou haſt in thy hand, to catch at a ſhadow.

'Tis matter of wonder that there are many who, tho' they can't name ſo much as one man whom they have really converted to God, yet will not in any one particular vigorouſly break thro' oppoſition, "for fear of overturning all." All! why thou haſt never yet built up any thing, which can be overthrown. But if God hath done ſome good by thee already, then I doubt not but he will do more. "There ſhall not any "man be able to ſtand before thee all the days of "thy life." "I will not fail thee nor forſake "thee," is his promiſe to thee and all his ſervants. And with this promiſe every true ſervant of God may bid defiance to all the world. Remember, "to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it "not, to him it is ſin." Let us but follow this rule with ſingleneſs of heart, and reſign to God the care of what is to come. For no good can ever be better advanced, than when one wedge drives another; and we daily grow more bold, in heartily promoting the cauſe of Chriſt, and the good of his church.

* 15. "But we muſt have a care of getting an "ill name; for then we ſhould do no good at all." This is the grand excuſe for the fear of man, and it is the bottom of almoſt all the reſt. This is

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what the men of prudence never fail to urge in their defence: and in this they suppose themselves impregnable. "If I get an ill name, I can do no good." Hast thou learnt this in the word of God? Hath Christ taught thee thus? Saith he not, *Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company; yea when they shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake.—Behold your reward is great in heaven; for in like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. Wo unto you when all men shall speak well of you: for so did their fathers to the false prophets.* To persuade men therefore that the reproach of Christ is an hindrance to the course of the gospel, is a true fetch of the devil's, by which he endeavours to make void the cross of Christ: whereas, on the contrary, every one of us must certainly believe that he can do nothing at all to the purpose, as long as he refuses to wear this badge of Christ.

"Yes; thou thinkest in thy heart, by my being reserved, and not exposing myself, some "may be won." Thou wilt only make hypocrites like thyself; men that are vainly puffed up by a little knowledge, and yet ashamed of Christ and his word, and unwilling to suffer any persecution for the cross of Christ. But if once thou canst resolve, with unshaken presence of mind, to break loose from the bondage of fearfulness, and thus to evidence thy faith, by taking on thee the reproach of Christ, then *others waxing confident by thy*

thy sufferings, will be the more emboldened to speak without fear.

*" But we must not expose ourselves: we must " not suffer ourselves to be made fools of by " others." We must not, I grant, do any thing which is foolish, *i. e.* contrary to God's word. But it is the devil's suggestion, that we should expose ourselves by directing our actions precisely according to it. Here it is, that St. *Paul's* caution will do us great service, *Let no man deceive himself. If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise.* Is it not a shame, when the Lord of glory was taken for a madman, and one possessed by the devil, for thee to be highly esteemed of the world? By this thou givest evidence against thyself, that thou dost not belong to Christ; that thou knowest not the dignity of his cross; and how then wilt thou be able to rejoice with him? It neither can nor must be otherwise. Thou must be looked upon as a fool in the world, if thou wilt be a disciple of Christ. It will not fail thee an hair's breadth. High and low, teachers and hearers, must alike be censured by the world, when once they earnestly turn themselves to God. For as soon as they cease to be conformed to the fashionable ways of the world, the world is immediately offended, and begins to scoff and rail, charging them with fanaticism, singularity, pharisaical hypocrisy, and what not? Loading them with a thousand lies and calumnies. And

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he that is afraid of this reproach from the world, must continue an hypocrite as long as he lives.

16. "Yet tho' we must not be conformed to the "world, we must *become all things to all men*," as St. *Paul* testifies of himself he did, "*that by all* "*means he might gain some.*" St. *Paul* gave sufficient proof of his being an undaunted workman, to whom God had given not the spirit of fear, but the spirit of power; but what hast thou to shew for thyself? Worldly minded men can become all to all too: but from another principle, by other means, and for quite another end. Canst thou express the bold alacrity of St *Paul*, who was not afraid to withstand St. *Peter* himself to the face, when the fear of man had made him play the hypocrite, *so that* others *also were carried away by his dissimulation?* It is certainly a great piece of wisdom, so to become weak with the weak, as not to lose any thing of our own strength; so to become all to all, as to stand free from all manner of hypocrisy. Examine then thyself, whether the serpent, with his prudence, hath not perverted thy mind from the simplicity in Christ. There is no cloak that more plausibly covers the fear of man than this: therefore look to it, that above all things thou dispatch this enemy.

Neither excuse thy conforming to the world in rich cloaths, banquets, dancing, plays, and the like, by saying, "I take no delight in these "trifles; but I submit to them, that I may have

" the more power over them that do." This is one of the fruits of our modern religion, raiſed on maxims of ſtate-policy: but if we bring it to the teſt, it is altogether inconſiſtent with *the truth, as it is in Jeſus.* " But you are for taking away " the abuſe of theſe things, and letting the uſe " remain." The true children of God, who are crucified to the world, can't find the leaſt true uſe in them. When they would avoid or prevent any evil, or do any good, either to their own ſouls, or their neighbours, they have no need of the devil's rattles, but fly to their God, and commit their whole cauſe to his direction. They reſt themſelves, while they uſe only ſuch meaſures as he directs, in full confidence that he will do what is beſt; and they enjoy even the neceſſary refreſhments of their bodies for no other end, but to ſpend the ſtrength received thereby, in humble acknowledgment and child-like thankfulneſs, and to renew the vigour of their ſoul and body for the ſervice of their neighbours.

CHAP. V.

Of the means whereby we may be delivered from the fear of man.

1. THE firſt and moſt neceſſary of all means is, a conſtant and earneſt endeavour to free ourſelves from the moſt dangerous deceitfulneſs

nefs of our own hearts. Nothing is a more fatal hindrance of a man's falvation, than the falfe conceit that he is already a Chriftian, and fo has no more need of laying the foundation of repentance, or of the firft converfion to God.

There is no error which it is more difficult to remove than this, efpecially in a minifter; who, having undertaken to fhew others the way to heaven, prefuppofes that he is himfelf therein. And becaufe he fees but little difference between himfelf and his hearers, and knows nothing of a faving change of heart, he by wholefale takes them all for Chriftians; and, like a blind Pharifee, reproves nothing but outward vices. His own inward part being not yet cleanfed, he cannot awaken others out of their flumber, and bring them over from their falfe, imaginary faith, to a true, living one, working by love. And by means of thefe unconverted preachers, deftitute of all experimental knowledge of fpiritual things, whole parifhes, cities and countries, are countenanced in their carnal fecurity.

Now, when God is pleafed to fend forth faithful witneffes of his truth, to awaken men out of their fpiritual flumber, then is the devil moft bufy to fecond this fecurity with the fear of man; one fearing this, another that, fo that both together choak the truth of God in the heart. The beft advice that can be given to a man in this cafe is, that he thoroughly fearch into his own condition, according to the tenour of the word of

God, that he may not be deluded with vain hopes. By this means he may come to a full aſſurance of the ſtate of his ſoul, and feel the Spirit of God witneſſing with his ſpirit, that he is a child of God: but till he will thus ſearch into the bottom of his heart, he cannot be freed from this fear. Nor will he be able to make a right uſe of any means at all that may be offered him: for without the power of the Holy Ghoſt, which till then he cannot have, a man will never get ſo far as to eye God only in all his actions; and till he does this, it is impoſſible he ſhould diſcharge his duty without the fear of man.

2. As the want of ſelf-denial is one of the chief cauſes of the fear of man, it will be abſolutely neceſſary, in order to the ſubduing of it, to labour after a true ſelf-denying frame of ſpirit: for as long as we fear the loſs of our eaſe, or goods, or honour, or greatneſs in the world, ſo long we ſhall be loth, by a cloſe following the ſteps of our Lord, to incur the diſpleaſure of men; till therefore a man *renounceth himſelf, he cannot be his diſciple.* But when once we ſeek no honour, but what cometh from God, nor any pleaſure, but that of doing his will, we ſhall find it eaſy to confeſs the truth, with undauntedneſs, both in word and deed.

Let him then, who will come after Chriſt, *deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow him.* And he that begins to be a proficient in this, will find the fear of man vaniſhing of itſelf:

for

for why do we fear men? For no other reaſon, but becauſe we are afraid of the croſs. And why do we fear the croſs? Becauſe we underſtand not the infinite good that lies hid in it. Becauſe we apprehend not, that, ſince the fall, whatever is really good, muſt ſpring up under the croſs.

3. And that we may never be weary of bearing it, or faint in our minds, we ſhould frequently and deeply meditate on the vanity, and even nothingneſs of this world, this idle dream, this vaniſhing ſhadow; on the nothingneſs of man himſelf, a worm, a vapour, a leaf driven by the wind; even in his beſt eſtate, *walking in a vain ſhew, and diſquieting himſelf in vain*; on the glorious Majeſty of the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and the unſpeakable joys that are at his right-hand for evermore; on the ſeveral degrees of that glory, which ſhall be proportioned to our ſeveral degrees of obedience: and in particular, on the mighty rewards annext to the denial of ourſelves, and chearful taking up our croſs.

4. The ſervants of Chriſt find this alſo a ſure means to conquer, when they are aſſaulted by the fear of man, to enter immediately into deep meditation on the bitter paſſion of our Lord. This is the antidote which St. *Peter* preſcribes, *Belovloved, think it not ſtrange, concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you; but rejoice, inaſmuch as ye are made partakers of the ſufferings of Chriſt.* Eph. iv. 12.—And ſo St. *Paul, Conſider him, that endured ſuch contradiction of ſinners againſt him-*

ſelf. And again, *We always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jeſus, that the life of him alſo might be made manifeſt in our mortal body.*

This is the true apoſtolical mind, which few apprehend: but thoſe who do apprehend and obtain it, tread in the ſame ſteps, and declare themſelves ſervants of the living God in true chearfulneſs of faith. They are not afraid *of the terror of men, but ſanctify the Lord God in their hearts:* having determined *to know* and regard *nothing but Jeſus Chriſt, and him crucified.*

5. Add to this, the conſideration of thoſe faithful champions of Chriſt, mentioned in the ſcriptures, as well as other hiſtories. This was the way St. *Paul* took to encourage them that were weak in faith, in the 11th chapter of his epiſtle to the *Hebrews*; which being an excellent abſtract of the whole Old Teſtament, ought to be more eſpecially pondered by us, and applied for the ſupport of our faith, in all outward and inward temptations. The hiſtories likewiſe of the primitive, as well as later martyrs, were they more attentively conſidered, would contribute much toward our attaining a true boldneſs of faith, ſo neceſſary for our Chriſtian warfare.

But chiefly (I repeat it again) *Look ye unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our faith.* Conſider him, or as the Greek word properly ſignifies) make a compariſon, between what Chriſt hath ſuffered, and what ye ſuffer. Conſider what proportion there is between the two: for ſure it is,

if

if you will be his followers, you muſt be ever determined and prepared *to reſiſt even unto blood, ſtriving againſt ſin.*

This it was that ſo powerfully inſpired St. *Paul* to expoſe himſelf to all manner of ſufferings. For the mark he always had in his eye was, *To know Chriſt, and the power of his reſurrection, and the fellowſhip of his ſufferings, being made conformable unto his death.* And St. *Peter*, from the ſame ground, ſaith, *If when you do well, and ſuffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called; becauſe Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us an example, that we ſhould follow his ſteps.* Chriſt himſelf alſo giveth us the ſame inſtructions: *Remember the word which I ſaid unto you, The ſervant is not greater than his Lord. If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you.* Wherefore, if any man would in good earneſt be rid of the fear of man, let him eye continually the example and image of Chriſt; and know aſſuredly, he cannot be happier than when he cometh up to the neareſt conformity with his ſuffering, crucified Lord. If his love be ſincere, it will kindle in his heart an ardent deſire to be like unto him: and this deſire will diſpel all the fear of man; becauſe it makes the croſs, which is ſo bitter to the fleſh, delightful to the ſpirit; ſo that it can no more hinder his drinking gladly *the cup which his father hath given him.*

Nay, St. *Paul* assures us, that a man not only overcomes thereby, but that he is *more than conqueror*; intimating, that by this victory he gains an inconceivable advantage over all the sufferings that can befal him for the gospel's sake. *Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword: nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors.* Nor does he stop here, but expresses the undaunted chearfulness of his heart yet more emphatically; *I am persuaded that neither life, nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor heighth, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God.* Let us, dear brethren, in like manner, press on in spirit into the living and powerful fellowship of Jesus Christ: so that we may *live no more, but he may live in us; and the life which we now live in the flesh, we may live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us.* Thus all fear will soon vanish out of our heart, and the joyful Spirit of Christ will fill up the room it had there, and make us grow in strength, comfort and encourage us in all our combats, and afford us a continual train of victories.

6. Let us then apply ourselves to God in earnest prayer, that he would be pleased to vouchsafe us this spirit, even *the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.* This is not of us, but the free gift of God; which gift he is most ready to impart

impart to thoſe who heartily pray for it. Let us then aſk, that we may receive; and more eſpecially at ſuch times, when we are called to act any thing that requires ſome exerting of the power of faith, let us have a care to do nothing according to our own fancy, but, in the firſt place, lay it open before God in prayer, and then ſet upon it, armed with the whole armour of God.

7. Now, as Jeſus Chriſt is he that can moſt certainly deliver us from all fear of man; ſo none can teach us better than he himſelf, by what means we muſt fight againſt it. And this he hath carefully done, eſpecially in the latter part of his ſtate of humiliation, leaving his diſciples, in his farewel diſcourſe to them, St. *John* 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 chapters) a moſt effectual medicine againſt it. Now the chief point inſiſted on hercin is, his promiſe of ſending the Holy Ghoſt to his diſciples; whom alſo he calls the Comforter, becauſe he drives away all fear of man out of the heart, filling and overflowing the ſame (which bare reaſon cannot do) with a ſtream of life and power.

Therefore, let him that would be a follower of Chriſt in truth, read and conſider this with due application: and then with full aſſurance accept of and rely upon this his promiſe: and with filial freedom and confidence pray to Chriſt to make it good unto him. And verily if we do bear reproach for his name's ſake, *the Spirit of glory and of God reſteth upon us.* And ſince

Chriſt himſelf is ſo near to them who ſuffer for his ſake, that thereby they become habitations of God, upon which the glory of God reſteth, yea, which are filled with the Spirit of glory and of God; ſhould we not, when tempted to fear man, be ſtrongly moved thereby, to reſiſt the temptation with all our might, and ſtedfaſtly to believe that the power of God will be perfected in our weakneſs? And what a comfort it is, that the Spirit himſelf *helpeth our infirmities?* Yea, and *maketh interceſſion for us with groans that cannot be uttered?* That is, moſt powerfully, and in a manner altogether inconceivable by human reaſon: he being our continual advocate in heaven, and in the council of the Holy Trinity, bequeathed to us by Chriſt, as long as we continue orphans in this world. Nay, Chriſt himſelf, who is at the right hand of God, ever maketh interceſſion for us. O that we were thoroughly ſenſible of the joy and readineſs lodged in the heart of God, to ſupport all thoſe who, ſeeking all their help from him alone, rely wholly on his paternal goodneſs! How eaſily then ſhould we get rid of the fear of man, and even bluſh for ſhame, that we had ever been diverted by it from any good undertaking!

* 8. But all theſe means will nothing avail, if we conſult in any thing with fleſh and blood, or with other fearful men. As ever therefore we deſire to be made free, we muſt either wholly forſake theſe perſons, and avoid all converſation with

with them, or at leaſt, uſe it ſo far as abſolute neceſſity requires with the utmoſt caution and circumſpection. Many have undertaken a good thing in readineſs of faith, but while they did not ſet about it immediately, without conferring with fleſh and blood, but firſt aſked the advice of this and another friend, they gave over the deſign, and ſtifled the gift of God that was in them. Indeed it is not to be expreſſed how many uſeful deſigns are by this means hindered and laid aſide. Doubtleſs, we ought not to rely too much on our own prudence, or to ſlight the advice of experienced men: but we muſt beware too of the other extreme, of *being toſſed about with every wind of doctrine:* for it is a good thing that the heart be eſtabliſhed; which ſtability is obtained by faith, but is eaſily loſt again by the fearful talk of thoſe that have little faith.

9. On the contrary, let us confer with the holy apoſtles, and obſerve the unuſual earneſtneſs wherewith they labour to free every one that nameth the name of Chriſt, from the fear of man. Would you know with what weapons they armed themſelves againſt it, *as good ſoldiers of Jeſus Chriſt?* Why they *took unto them the whole armour of God, and ſo were able to withſtand in the evil day.* And thus may you gain the victory, which you will never be able to obtain by human weapons, ſuch as wit and learning.

10. Indeed, not only the writings of the apoſtles; not only all holy writ, from the beginning thereof to the end; but heaven and earth, yea, and

all the creatures of God would assist us, would we consider them with a believing heart. Doth not our Saviour, to reproach our idle fear, send us even to the sparrows for better information? *Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father?* Nay, he directs us to the very hairs of our head, saying, *But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.* Elsewhere, he takes the grass of the field to witness against our little faith: and all this to expose our horrible unbelief, and to represent to us in a clear light, that a man by faith becomes the most glorious, and by unbelief the most base and miserable of all creatures.

11. Stand fast therefore, as becomes those to whom are made all those glorious declarations; *ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*; which plainly alludes to *Exodus* xix. 34. where we find these emphatic expressions of God; *ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles wings, and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. For all the earth is mine: and ye shall be a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

Now, not only *Israel* after the flesh, but all the people of God, have a right to lay claim to, and

and comfort themſelves with all theſe his glorious promiſes. And to what purpoſe did he make them? Was it not to aſſure all his ſervants, that none, how powerful ſoever, ſhould be able to hurt them, as long as they continue faithful in his covenant? Nor is it poſſible for the whole world to hurt one that entirely relies on his promiſes. For he who truſts in God, doth by this faith ſo unite himſelf to the power of the living God, that thereby he becomes much ſtronger than the whole world, whether viſible or inviſible.

This precious promiſe of God, concerning the royal prieſthood of his ſaints, was confirmed and ſealed by the death and blood of the Son of God. *Jeſus Chriſt the faithful witneſs, the firſt begotten from the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth, hath loved us, and waſhed us from our ſins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and prieſts unto God and his Father.* Let every Chriſtian then demonſtrate himſelf to be one of theſe royal prieſts, by breaking through all difficulties, in true chearfulneſs of faith, which he is willing to give to all, without reſpect of perſons: by fighting manfully the battles of the Lord, and preſſing on for the prize of his high calling.

Let every one that hath by baptiſm begun to renounce the devil and all his works, entirely dedicate himſelf to the ſervice of the Lord of hoſts:

hoſts: * Let him deeply conſider, with how high and holy a majeſty, with how great a monarch *(who indeed is the only potentate)* he hath entruſted his ſoul and body; and no more *fear them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the ſoul.* Let him think with himſelf how ſecure he is under the protection of ſo great a King. *He dwelleth in the ſecret of the Moſt High; he abideth in the ſhadow of the Almighty.* But let him alſo duly conſider, that he is not to fight this combat by his own ſtrength; but that the captain of the Lord's hoſts, delivering his own ſword to him, will arm him with his own power, and ſay unto him, as he did unto *Joſhua, I will never leave thee, nor forſake thee. Have not I commanded thee? Be ſtrong, and of good courage; be not afraid; neither be thou diſmayed: for the the Lord thy God is with thee, whitherſoever thou goeſt.*

In fine, renew thyſelf in the daily ſpirit of thy mind, and draw life and nouriſhment from the word of God. Stir up thyſelf in prayer, and ſtrengthen thyſelf with the company of other faithful Chriſtians: ſince, *where two or three are gathered together in his name, there is Chriſt in the midſt of them.* Thou oughteſt to *ſtir up the gift of God*, the child-like, chearful ſpirit always, and without intermiſſion, even as a fire, by conſtant blowing is kept up to a flame. Preſs towards higher degrees of faith, by pondering the promiſes

promiſes of God, and continually exerciſing thy love to thy neighbour, with all ſingleneſs of heart, to the uttermoſt of thy power, wherever God giveth thee opportunity. For nothing conduces more to the increaſe of faith, than a continual exercife of it.

And if a man know himſelf to be naturally baſhful and fearful, let him with the greater earneſtneſs aſſault this enemy, and labour to keep a conſcience void of offence, leſt his natural fearfulneſs grow upon him. Let him have a care, in the beginning, not to make himſelf the ſlave of other men, eſpecially of them that are in high places; but behave himſelf always as a faithful ſervant of God, in all diſcretion and humility. Or, if he has at firſt fallen ſhort, let him the more now encourage himſelf in God, to obey him henceforth rather than man; not ſuffering himſelf to be any more ſhaken either by force or ſubtilty. He ought to lift up his head in the power of Chriſt, though under the hardeſt combat; and to make the glory of God his whole and ſole end, in all he does, or leaves undone. Bleſſed is he that thus ſtandeth his ground in all combats and aſſaults; he ſhall go from faith to faith, from ſtrength to ſtrength, and finally overcome all things with Chriſt.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of Chriſtian diſcretion.

1. AS fleſh and blood is commonly inclined either to exceed or fall ſhort in matters of duty; ſo it is eaſy, while we avoid the fear of man, to run into preſumption, raſhneſs, and inconſiderateneſs. Therefore it is neceſſary that we be continually on our guard, that ſo our boldneſs may be ever tempered by wiſdom; that wiſdom I mean which cometh from above, and is called by St. *Luke*, *the wiſdom of the juſt*. And ſo St. *Paul* ſtiles it the ſpirit of a ſound mind: *God hath not given us the ſpirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a ſound mind.* For indeed one ſpirit works all this in man; and through him again in others; making him not only diſcharge his duty with undaunted courage, and giving him a pure deſire to promote nothing but the glory of God, and the good of his neighbour, but enabling him alſo, in all his doings and ſufferings, to behave with divine prudence and wiſdom. And *if any lack this wiſdom, let him aſk of God, and it ſhall be given him.* It ſhall ſurely be given him, who continually keeps a watchful eye over his own ſpirit; who is ever humbling

humbling himſelf in the ſight of God; and, like a helpleſs infant, praying to God for diſcretion and underſtanding, and taking the word of God for his conſtant counſellor.

2. Where this foundation is laid, we need not fear any hurt from the boldneſs of faith. And though perhaps, for want of experience, it may not always be exerted in due time and place, yet we are to take heed, as ſoon as we are ſenſible of it, not to be too much dejected for this imperfection; but to praiſe God, who therefore ſhews us our failings, that we may mend them, and who will himſelf ſupply what is yet behind. And whenever we obſerve ſuch failings in others, we ought to be particularly cautious how we judge them. For God will not judge according to our, but according to his own mind; and *out of the mouths of babes and ſucklings he hath* often *perfected praiſe.*

But hereby we do not in the leaſt reflect upon any one, who, from a long experience in the ways of the Lord, doth, in the ſpirit of love, mind his brother of the failings, which have overtaken him in any of his actions. By this he doth not ſtifle any good that is in him, but rather prunes the good tree from its ſuperfluous, irregular ſhoots, taking care of, and having an eye over it, that it may bring forth its fruit in due ſeaſon.

3. And that we may be aſſured of ſo doing, we muſt, before all things, conſider, that as there

is

is no true faith, without repentance; ſo neither can there be any true boldneſs of faith, unleſs a man exerciſe himſelf daily in it. For the undauntedneſs of faith is no ſuch groundleſs raſhneſs, as is found in a wild ſoldier: but it is the fear of God, which having taken poſſeſſion of the heart, expels the fear of man; and where the ſpirit of man is truly humbled, and broken under the mighty hand of God, there the Spirit of God dwells and exerts itſelf ſo glorioufly, that there is no room for the fleſh to boaſt. Let no man deceive himſelf. There is no true faith, without holineſs of heart and life. Whatever is ſeparate from this, cannot laſt long, be the appearance of it ever ſo glorious.

* 4. Again, the true boldneſs of faith, is known, by its continually working by love. By faith a man is made a lord over all; but by love a ſervant of all. By faith he is a king; but by love a ſpiritual prieſt, miniſtring, not lording, in Chriſt's ſanctuary. Now when a man doth not abide in love, but is ſwayed by anger, hatred, or the like, and perhaps breaking out in ſcoffing, railing, or bitterneſs, he muſt not pretend to boldneſs of faith: and though he may have had ſome degreee of it before, it is now corrupted and loſt. Therefore in this caſe, a man ought firſt to humble himſelf before God, and when he is ſincerely renewed in the ſpirit of his mind, then to preſs on again in the work of faith,

faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love.

5. To keep up this boldneſs, we muſt continue in prayer, and in child-like communion with God; for by this the mind is beſt guarded from vain excurſions, and inſpired with meekneſs towards all men. And whoever, by humble, fervent, and conſtant prayer, labours after a ſtricter union with God, will not only be fortified againſt all precipitancy and haſtineſs of ſpirit, but alſo againſt tempting God; of which men of little faith are particularly careful to caution him.

6. Neither doth this boldneſs of faith at all interfere with the obedience which inferiors of every kind owe their reſpective ſuperiors; only remembring, that we are never to pay any one ſo unlimited, blindfold an obedience, as to prefer the authority of man before the clear command of God.

This caution is highly neceſſary; there being but too many who think they act entirely in faith, when indeed they are only following their own fancy, without any warrant from the word of God. And this diſtemper is the more dangerous, the leſs remedy can be applied to cure it. For thoſe that *walk in the light of the fire of their own kindling*, if they are adviſed to true humility, diſcretion, and obedience, are apt to ſuſpect that it proceeds from a deſign of lording over their conſciences; and that all the advice

given

given them, is no better than the fruit of unbelief, and the fear of man. They think themselves happy that they do not adhere to men, without taking notice how deep they are enslaved to themselves. But he is truly wise who humbles himself more and more, and is always ready to submit to all men. For where humility is, the enemy finds no room for his most dangerous temptations.

7. Let us then continually join the exercise of daily repentance, the denial of ourselves and of our own wills, of true humility, obedience, submission, prayer, of the meekness and patience of Christ, of hearty love for our brethren, and compassion for their failings, and all other virtues that flow from the wisdom which cometh from above. Let us, I say, join and knit all these together with the chearful exercise of faith and trust in God. Let us excite one another, with comfortable words, to cast of all fear of man. Wheresoever God hath wrought a good will, let us take heed of damping it in any of the least members of Christ; but let us cherish it by the word of the gospel, and by the rules of true Christian discretion, keep it within such bounds, as may bring it to a fuller and more substantial maturity.

CHAP. VII.

Of the good which arises from the boldness of faith, conquering the fear of man.

1. THE eleventh chapter to the *Hebrews* lays an ample foundation for reflections on the glorious effects of faith, and on that power of God which hath at all times so exerted itself in true believers: but here it will be necessary to bid you take heed of making God changeable, by saying with the unbelieving world, "This indeed has been done formerly, but now "miracles are ceased." For by this false maxim, suggested from the bottomless pit, the highest dishonour is thrown upon the living God, all his promises are made void, all the examples he hath set before our eyes are absolutely useless and impertinent; yea, and all his calls and allurements to an active faith, are rendered null and insignificant. And whereas, in truth, we have none to blame but ourselves, for not treading in the same footsteps of faith, in which the saints of old walked; and consequently, for not seeing the glory of God as they did, we hereby cast all the blame upon God, and the

the difference of times: whereas the difference, in reality, lies not in the times, but in the perſons.

For though it cannot be ſaid, that every believer now muſt do the very ſame works that were done by *Abraham* or *Moſes*, yet ought every one to "*follow the faith*" of theſe holy men, and to exert the ſame with full power and energy, in that ſtate and condition wherein God hath placed him, and in thoſe circumſtances that daily offer; and in ſo doing he may be fully aſſured, that he (as well as they) ſhall ſee the glory of God. And with ſuch a heart and mind are the ſcriptures to be read, and the examples and glorious effects of faith to be conſidered, that ſo we may receive ſtrength and holy boldneſs, more nearly to unite ourſelves with God, and to enjoy his infinite love and faithfulneſs in a more ample and abundant manner.

2. Now becauſe faith, though it be ſo high and precious a gift of God, is not commonly eſteemed according to its dignity, it is the more needful to obſerve, what the ſcripture throughout teacheth, that all the good which was ever wrought in the world by man, was done by faith; whereby men are ſo united to God, that "*all things are poſſible*" to them. Wherefore it is highly neceſſary, with all plainneſs and earneſtneſs, to repreſent, not only to the world, but to the children of God too, that faith

faith is something far more glorious than reason can conceive or express; for till a man is sensible of this, he is utterly unable to comprehend what an inestimable treasure it brings with it. But when once he comes to know that it is the substance ὑπόστασις, the ground and bottom of things hoped for, whereon, as an immoveable foundation, all the inconceivable goods we hope for, do rest; and an ἔλεγχος, or convincing evidence and testimony of the Spirit, which assures us beyond all doubt of things not seen: I say, where faith is thus known and felt in a man's heart, then he sees the advantage of that faith which overcometh all fear of man, and is of so large a compass, as to contain all, and more than all we can ask or think.

For then he discovers, that it is faith which delivers a man from all evil of soul or body; and on the other hand, puts him in possession of sovereign bliss, and fills him with the fulness of God; yea, and that whenever (either in the Old or New Testament) he would perform any thing great and glorious, he hath always employed those whom faith had set free from the slavish fear of man. A single man, setting aside the fear of flesh and blood, and going forth in the name of the living God, hath frequently saved a whole nation. And what was more remarkable in the apostles, at their

their beginning to preach the gospel, than their great boldness; at which the high-priest, scribes, and elders stood amazed? And for this reason they are set before us as examples; teaching, by the victory of their faith, to confess Christ before all men without fear, and bear his cross, that we may partake of his glory.

Reflections

Reflections upon the conduct of

HUMAN LIFE;

With reference to learning and knowledge.

Extracted from Mr. NORRIS.

The PREFACE.

SINCE *the great happiness or misery of human life depends wholly upon the right or wrong conduct of it, he that shall point out any of its irregularities or mistakes, is a universal friend, a promoter of the public happiness. And the more severe his censure is, provided it be just, the more serviceable it may be.*

Especially, if the irregularities he points out are not only important, frequent and inveterate, but such as lie secret and unobserved, and have all along passed under the notion of excellencies. He that reflects upon such misconducts as these, obliges by his discovery as well as reproof.

This consideration has occasioned the following reflections upon the study of learning and

knowledge; the greateſt faults of which, by a kind of unaccountable ſuperſtition are canonized virtues.

The truth is, the light that divulges other miſcarriages will be ſure to hide theſe. For beſide that they are viſible only to a few (ſince none can judge of the faults of the learned without learning) thoſe few that do diſcern them, have ſeldom ingenuity enough to acknowledge them. For either they are ſo proud as not to be willing to own themſelves to have been ſo long under a miſtake; or ſo ill-natured that they don't care others ſhould be directed to a better way than they themſelves have travelled in.

In the following reflections I have endeavoured to mark out ſome of theſe leſs obſerved miſconducts, wherewith I myſelf have been too long impoſed on, and which after all my conviction (ſo deep are the impreſſions of early prejudice) I can hardly yet find power to correct. For education is the great bias of human life, and there is this double witchcraft in it, that 'tis a long time before a man can ſee any thing amiſs in a way he is uſed to, and when he does, 'tis not very eaſy to change it.

I can eaſily divine how theſe reflections will be received by ſome of the rigid votaries of old learning. But if they are of ſervice here and there to an ingenuous and unenſlaved ſpirit, I ſhall not much regard the magiſterial cenſures of thoſe, whoſe great and long ſtudy has had no better effect upon them, than to make them too wiſe for conviction.

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The First REFLECTION.

Wherein the general conduct of human life is taxed, for placing learning in such things as are little or nothing perfective of the understanding.

1. AS there are two faculties in man, understanding and will; so there is a double conduct of human life, intellectual and moral. The moral conduct of men has been continually exposed, ever since preaching and writing have been in the world. But it has fared otherwise with the intellectual, which stands not so fair a mark, nor has been so often his. Not that it is really less faulty, but because its faultiness is less notorious, lies further in, and must be drawn forth into view by a chain of consequences, which few have either discernment enough to make, or patience enough to attend to.

2. The chief irregularities of it are three, respecting the end, the means, and the degree of affection.

First, The placing learning in such things as are little or nothing perfective of the understanding.

Secondly, The undue and irregular method of profecuting what is really perfective of it; and

Thirdly, The too importunate purfuit of knowledge in general.

3. Firft, Men generally place learning in fuch things as are little or nothing perfective of the underftanding. This, I confefs, is a fevere charge, as it faftens an imputation of folly upon the learned order: and not only fo, but in that very thing wherein they think their wifdom confifts. Learned men do indeed often, not only own but affect ignorance in things befide their profeffion. But to cenfure them as defective in that one thing they pretend to, to make that their blind fide where they think they fee cleareft, to maintain, that they are not only not really knowing, but that generally they don't fo much as know what true knowledge is; this is fo high a charge, that even thofe who may be convinced of the truth, will fcarce forgive the boldnefs, of it.

4. That the truth of it may appear, I fhall firft briefly obferve, what knowledge is perfective of the underftanding, and then fhew, that the generality of the world place learning in that which is not fo.

5. And, firft, I grant the knowledge of all thofe truths is perfective of the underftanding, which are the matter of thofe arts and fciences, that are built upon ftable and immoveable foundations,

tions, such as divinity, metaphysics, geometry, together with those unchangeable rules and measures of reason and consequence, which lead us to all other knowledge, and are the subject of that art we term logic. And accordingly I allow him to be a truly learned and knowing man, who has furnished his mind with bright and clear ideas, lodged them orderly and regularly in his head, and settled the relations and consequences of one to another. He that is able to think clearly (for so much a man knows, as he understands distinctly, and no more) to judge truly and solidly, and to reason dependently and consequentially.

6. But this is not the measure which the gerality of the world has thought fit to proceed by. Learning is generally placed in a sort of knowledge, widely different from this. The world does not esteem him a learned man, whose learning has cleared his understanding, who is arrived at distinctness of conception, and is a thorough master of notion and discourse. No, it will cost great pains, great labour of mind, and closeness of thinking to attain to this. This therefore must not be learning, but something else must, that is easier to be attained, though little or nothing perfective of the understanding. And in such knowledge it is generally placed.

* 7. For, first, It is reckoned a notable point of learning to understand variety of languages. This alone gives a man a title to learning, with-

out one grain of ſenſe; and on the other ſide, let a man be an angel for notion and diſcourſe, yet unleſs he can expreſs the ſame thought in variety of words, he may go for a rational, but will by no means be eſteemed a learned man. Now is it not a ſtrange thing, that ſo much ſtreſs ſhould be laid on ſo very a trifle? For what am I the better for being able to tell, what 'tis a-clock in twenty languages? What does this ſignify to the perfection of my underſtanding? Words are purely in order to ſenſe: and are therefore of no farther value, than as they help either to learn or to communicate it. Therefore, to affect them for themſelves, is to turn the means into the end, than which nothing is more abſurd. And yet this vain piece of pedantry has prevailed all the world over, and with ſome to that degree, that they have confounded ideas with words, and have made all ſcience to terminate in the latter. Thus Mr. *Hobbes* makes reaſon to be nothing elſe, but "*Sequela Nominum*, a well-ordered train of words." Never certainly was a plainer argument of the great degeneracy of mankind. And tho' all the multipliers of tongues are not comprehended under this latter charge, yet it may concern them to conſider, how great a folly it muſt be to place learning in that, which is one of the greateſt curſes upon earth, and which ſhall utterly ceaſe in heaven.

* 8. Again, it paſſes for an extraordinary part of learning to underſtand hiſtory: that is, in other words, to know what a company of ſilly creatures called

called men, have been doing for almoſt theſe ſix thouſand years. Now, what is my underſtanding the perfecter for this? I deny not, that there are ſome matters of fact, as the more remarkable turns of eccleſiaſtical hiſtory, and the greater revolutions of the civil world, which are of moment to be known; becauſe, by diſcovering to us the conduct of divine providence, they ſupply us with occaſions of acknowledging and adoring the wiſdom and goodneſs of God. Neither do I deny, that there are many other hiſtorical paſſages, which may be of moment to be known; tho' not as perfective of our underſtanding, but as touching our intereſt. And ſo it may be of moment to me to know, the clock has ſtruck one, if I have made an aſſignation at that time; but ſure the bare naked theory of the clock's having ſtruck one, will add but little to my intellectual perfection. The moſt trivial matter of fact in the world is worth knowing, if I have any concern depending upon it: and the greateſt without that, is utterly inſignificant. So that 'tis not from perfecting of our underſtanding, but from the relation they have to our intereſt, that theſe things deſerve to be known.

* 9. I would deſire the great magnifiers of hiſtory only to anſwer me this one queſtion. Suppoſe ſuch and ſuch matters of fact, in the knowing which they perhaps glory more, than the actors themſelves did in the doing them, had never been done? Suppoſe *Fabius* had never weathered out *Hannibal* by delays, nor *Cyrus* took *Babylon* by

draining the river into the ditches: what diminution would this have been to the perfection of their underſtanding? They cannot ſay it would have been any. And why then ſhould the knowing them now they are done, be reckoned an addition to it? And yet we find it is ſo, and that men ſtudy theſe things, not only for their uſe, (that we allow) but for their mere theory, placing learning in ſuch hiſtory as has nothing to commend it, but only that it tells you, ſuch and ſuch things were done. Of this impertinent ſort is the greateſt part of the *Roman* and *Grecian* hiſtory: which, had not the world voted it for learning, would no more concern a man to know, than that a bird has dropt a feather upon the *Pyrenean* mountains.

10. Again, it paſſes for a notable piece of learning to underſtand chronology: to be able to adjuſt the intervals and diſtances of time, when ſuch a man flouriſhed, when ſuch an action was done, and the like. Now I deny not, but it may concern ſome to know theſe things, who have any intereſt depending upon it. It may concern ſome to know, for inſtance, that there is a twofold date of the victory at *Actium*, the one reckoned from the fight there, the other from the taking of *Alexandria*. But however uſeful it may be to know this, yet certainly as to any intellectual perfection that accrues by it, it muſt needs be a very unedifying ſtuffage of the head; al-

tho'

tho' 'tis so generally accounted a great accomplishment and enrichment of it.

* 11. There are many other things which the humour of the world has turned up for learning, which ignorance will never be the better for, and which wisdom does not need. Thus 'tis counted learning to have tumbled over a multitude of books, especially if great ones, and old ones, and obscure ones; but most of all, if manuscripts, the recovery of one of which is reckoned so much added to *the common-wealth of learning*, as they call it. Hence a *well-read* man signifies the very same as a *learned* man in most men's dictionaries: and by *well-read* they don't mean one that has *read well*, that has cleared and improved his understanding by his reading, but only one that has *read much*, tho' perhaps he has puzzled and confounded his notions by doing so. Thus again, it goes for learning, to be acquainted with men's opinions, especially of the ancients; to know what this or that philosopher held, what this or that author says, tho' perhaps he says nothing but what is either absurd, or obviously true. What, for instance, can be more absurd, than that fancy of *Empedocles*, that there are two semicircles compassing the earth betwixt them, one of fire, the other of air; and that the former makes day, and the latter night? And yet to know this is learning! What can be more obviously true, than that grave doctrine of *Aristotle*, that privation must go before the introduction of the form in all

generation? Or, that a thing must lose one form, before it can take another? And yet 'tis learning to know that he taught this! To know the thing is nothing: but to know that *Aristotle* taught it, that is learning! Nay farther, tho' I am able to demonstrate the circulation of the blood, or the motion of the earth, yet I shall not be admitted into the order of the learned, unless I am able to tell, that *Copernicus* discovered the one, and *Harvey* the other. So much more learned an atchievment it is, to know opinions than things! And accordingly those are reckoned the most learned authors, who have given the greatest specimens of this kind of knowledge. Thus *Picus Mirandula* is more admired for his examination of the doctrine of the Pagans, than any of them were for what they delivered.

12. Now what an unreasonable imposition is this, that tho' a man can think and write like an angel himself, yet he must not be accounted a man of learning, unless he can tell what every whimsical writer hath said before him? And how hard will it fall upon those, whose lot is to breathe in the last ages of the world, who must be accountable for all the whims and extravagancies of so many centuries? And yet this is made so great a part of learning, that the learning of most men lies in books rather than in things. And among authors, where one writes upon things, there are twenty write upon books. Nay, some carry this humour so far, that 'tis thought learning to know

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the very title of books and their editions, with the time and place when and where they were printed. And many there are who value themselves not a little on this mechanical faculty, tho' they know no more of what is in them, than they do of what is written in the rolls of deſtiny.

13. From this placing of learning in the knowledge of books, proceeds that ridiculous vanity of multiplying quotations, which is alſo reckoned another piece of learning, tho' they are uſed ſo impertinently, that there can be no other end in them, but to ſhew, that the author has read ſuch a book. And yet it is no ſuch convincing evidence of that neither. It being neither new nor difficult, for a man that is reſolved upon it, to quote ſuch authors as he never read nor ſaw. And were it not too odious a truth, I could name ſeveral of thoſe author-mongers who paſs for men of ſhrewd learning.

14. Theſe and many other ſuch things (for 'twere endleſs to reckon up all) are by the majority of the world voted for learning, and in theſe we ſpend our education, our ſtudy and our time, tho' they are no way perfective of our underſtanding. So that in ſhort, the charge of this reflection amounts to thus much, that learning is generally placed in the knowledge of ſuch things, as the intellectual perfection of man is little or nothing concerned in.

The Second REFLECTION.

Wherein the general conduct of human life is taxed for using undue and irregular methods, in profecuting what is really perfective of the underſtanding.

1. IN the preceding reflection the conduct of human life was cenſured, for placing learning in what is not perfective of the underſtanding. In the preſent, it is charged with purſuing what is ſo, in an undue and irregular manner. The other was an error about the end; this is an error about the means: which are the two hinges upon which all prudence and imprudence turn.

* 2. That the truth of this charge may appear, we are firſt to determine, what is the right method of profecuting that learning, which is really perfective of underſtanding. And this, no doubt, muſt be an application to him, *from whom every good and perfect gift deſcendeth.* This is the right and the only right method of enquiry after that truth which is perfective of our underſtanding. For God is the region of truth, and *in him are hid all the treaſures of wiſdom and knowledge.* This is that great and univerſal oracle lodged in every man's breaſt, whereof the ancient *Urim and Thummim* was an expreſſive emblem. This we

we all may and muſt conſult, if we would enrich our minds with ſuch knowledge as is perfective of the underſtanding. This is the true method of being truly wiſe. And it is no other method than what we are adviſed to, by the ſubſtantial wiſdom of God. *Whoſo is ſimple, let him turn in hither. I am the light of the world: he that follows me, or* (as the word more properly ſignifies) *he that keepeth company with me, walketh not in darkneſs.*

3. There are three ways of doing this; the firſt is, by attention; the ſecond, by purity of heart and life; the third, by prayer. The firſt, attention, *Malebranche* calls the natural prayer of the ſoul to God for farther illumination. For indeed it is a ſilent addreſs and application of the ſoul to the fountain of light and truth; 'tis an interrogation of the divine oracle, the eternal word of God, and a patient waiting upon him for an anſwer. 'Tis in a word, an act of intellectual devotion to the Father of Lights, and ſuch as if unfolded, beſpeaks him in the words of the royal ſupplicant, *Give me wiſdom that ſitteth by thy throne!*

* 4. This is the ſame with thinking or meditating; and as it is the firſt, ſo it is the directeſt and moſt compendious method of ſcience. For this is to go directly to the ſpring-head, to the lucid fountain of good. 'Tis to fix the eye of the mind upon the intellectual ſun, which muſt needs be the moſt ready way to be enlightened. The more heedfully we attain to this, we ſhall

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not only discover the more, but also more clearly see what we do discover. So a man that casts only a short careless glance upon the milky way, sees only a confused whiteness. But when he fixes his eye upon it, with steadiness and delay of application, he begins to discern it more distinctly, and a new star every moment rises under his inspection: and still the harder he looks, the more he discerns, 'till he is satiated with the brightness and multitude of light.

5. This was the method of the inventers of arts and sciences: they made their way by mere dint of thinking. This is the method that has been used ever since, by the greatest improvers of them; such as *Bacon*, *Boyle*, *Harvey*, *Malebranche*, &c. And we may safely prophesy, if ever any extraordinary advancement be made in them hereafter, it will be done by thinking.

6. The second way is, by purity of heart and life: for as vice not only proceeds from ignorance, but also causes it, by befotting and clouding the understanding, so purity not only proceeds from knowledge, but also produces it, making the soul see more clearly and distinctly. And the same method is recommended in scripture, *Wisdom*, says the wise man, *will not enter into a polluted spirit*. So the angel to *Daniel*, *Many shall be purified and made white, and none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand.* To this purpose too, is that of our Lord, above repeated; *He that followeth me, walketh not in darkness*;

neſs; the purity of his heart is a light to his underſtanding.

7. But to repreſent this more clearly; there are two ways whereby purity of heart ſerves to the acquirement of knowledge; by natural efficacy, and by the divine bleſſing. And firſt, by natural efficacy, either by clearing the medium, or by aſſiſting the faculty. As to the former, we are aſſured, not only that the ſoul now ſees through a medium, and that this medium is the body, but likewiſe that the groſſneſs of this medium hinders the ſight of the ſoul. Whence it follows, that whatever helps this medium, helps the ſight of the ſoul. And this purity does; eſpecially that eminent part of it which conſiſts in chaſtity and temperance. For firſt, it compoſes the paſſions, eſpecially that of luſt, by that the animal ſpirits, and by that the blood. For the motion of the paſſions ferments the ſpirits, and the fermentation of the ſpirits agitates the blood, and by that agitation raiſes all the feculent and droſſy parts of it, and makes it like a troubled fountain, thick and muddy. And therefore it is, that men in any paſſion can't reaſon ſo clearly, as when they are in more quiet and ſilence of ſpirit. But by purity all this diſturbance is allayed, the paſſions are becalmed, the ſpirits fixed, the fountain of the blood cleared up, and ſo all the inner part of the glaſs, through which we ſee, becomes more bright and tranſparent, more apt

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to tranſmit the rays of light to the ſoul, which conſequently ſees more clearly through it.

8. But this is not all: for purity clears the outward part of the glaſs too. Firſt by conſequence, becauſe the finer the ſpirits and blood are, the finer will be the threads of the outward veil alſo. Then more directly; becauſe temperance refines and ſubtilizes the texture of the body, and diminiſhes its bulk and groſſneſs, and unloads the ſoul of a good part of that burthen, which not only preſſes down her aſpirations, but alſo hinders her ſight.

* 9. And as purity thus clears the medium, ſo it alſo aſſiſts the faculty. And that by the ſame general way, by compoſing the paſſions, which otherwiſe not only trouble and thicken the medium, but alſo divide and diſperſe the faculty. For the more things a man deſires, the more he will be engaged to think on; and the more he thinks on at once, the more languid and confuſed will his conceptions be. But purity, by compoſing the paſſions, contracts the deſires, and by contracting theſe, it contracts alſo the thoughts; whereby a man is reduced to a greater unity, ſimplicity and recollection of mind; and having but few thoughts to divide him, is the better able to think clearly.

10. Purity of heart ſerves to the acquirement of knowledge, ſecondly, by the divine bleſſing. It invites not only the Holy Spirit, but alſo the Father and the Son, even the whole Godhead,

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to come and dwell in the ſoul. This we are aſſured of from our Lord's own mouth: *He that loveth me, ſhall be loved of my Father, and I will love him and manifeſt myſelf to him.* And again, *If a man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* The chaſte and good ſoul ſhall not only be loved by God, but be alſo of his council and privacy. This is the beloved diſciple, who has the privilege to lean upon the boſom of his Lord, and to be admitted to his moſt ſecret communications. And therefore ſays the pſalmiſt, *The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him.* And of *Ananias*, *Azarias*, and *Miſael*, who refuſed to defile themſelves with the king's meat, it is ſaid, *That God gave them knowledge and ſkill in all learning and wiſdom.*

11. The third and laſt way of conſulting God is by prayer. This alſo is a method which the ſcripture adviſes us to. *If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, who giveth to every man liberally, and upbraideth not, and it ſhall be given him.* And this we know was the method whereby the wiſeſt of men obtained his unparalleled wiſdom. For as wiſdom was his choice, ſo the method of his ſeeking and gaining it was by prayer.

12. Thus have I deſigned, and by ſcripture and reaſon proved, what is the right method of proſecuting that truth which is perfective of the underſtanding. And now I think there needs not many words to ſhew, that as learning is common-

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ly placed in what is not perfective of it, so what is so, is generally prosecuted by undue methods. For whereas the first method of acquiring it is by attention or thinking. this is generally so little regarded, that few men think less, for the most part, than they who are engaged in the professed study of knowledge. This they don't reckon any part of study, nor any progress in the stage of learning, but only a graver way of being idle. 'Tis then only they study, when they are hanging their heads over an old musty folio, and stuffing their memories with grey sentences and venerable sayings. And thus they spend their time and their pains, and having scrambled through a company of books (most of which perhaps were written to as little purpose as they are read) they think themselves learned men, and the world is too often of their opinion, tho' they have not made themselves master of any sense or notion, nor are able to demonstrate one single truth upon solid principles, and in a consequential process.

13. And this is the method not only of those who misplace learning, but also of the most of those who place it right. Even these do not generally think for it, but read for it; seek it not in their souls, but in books. I deny not that reading is one way to knowledge; but then 'tis only by accident, as it is a help to thinking. And therefore thinking is the only thing to be regarded even in reading; for reading, as such, is nothing. And then we read to most purpose, when we are thereby most enabled to think. So

that

that thinking is the immediate end of reading, as underſtanding is of thinking. And yet this method is generally ſo much inverted, that the main ſtreſs is laid upon reading. Nothing but *read, read,* as long as eyes and ſpectacles will hold; no matter whether the head be *clear*, ſo it be but *full.*

14. Again, whereas purity of heart and life is another method of attaining true knowledge, 'tis a ſad as well as juſt obſervation, that this is not only neglected by thoſe who ſit down contentedly in ignorance, but alſo by the generality of thoſe few that addict themſelves to the improvement of their minds. Nay, theſe, in proportion to their number, ſeem more guilty in this reſpect than the others, and nothing is ſo common, as to ſee men of famed learning, who are yet very corrupt in their tempers and lives. Whence ſome have fancied learning an enemy to religion, and cried up ignorance as the mother of devotion. And tho' their concluſion be notoriouſly abſurd, yet it muſt be owned, the ground on which they build it is too true. Men famed for learning are often as infamous for living; and many that ſtudy hard to furniſh their heads, are yet very negligent in purifying their hearts: not conſidering, that there is a moral as well as a natural communication between them; and that they are concerned to be pure in heart and life, not only upon the common account in order to happineſs hereafter, but even in order to their own particular end here.

15. Then

15. Then, laſtly, whereas another method of learning is prayer; the generality of ſtudents do not apply themſelves to this at all. Pray indeed ('tis to be hoped) they do for other things which they think lie more out of their reach; but as for learning, they think they can compaſs this well enough by their own induſtry, and the help of good books, without being beholden to the aſſiſtance of heaven. But did they attentively conſider, that God is truth, 'tis not to be imagined they would be ſo indifferent in uſing prayer, or any of the preceding methods of conſulting God for his own light.

The Third REFLECTION.

Wherein the general conduct of human life is taxed with too importunate a purſuit of knowledge in general.

1. HAVING paſt the two firſt ſtages of our intellectual conduct, that of the end and and that of the means, and reflected on the irregularities of each, I come now to the third and laſt, which conſiſts not in the choice of the object, or of the method to it, but in the degree of affection wherewith it is proſecuted. And this part of our conduct is as irregular and faulty, if not more ſo, than either of the former: and the fault of it is, a too importunate purſuit of knowledge in general.

2. This

2. This charge is of a larger extent than either of the preceding: thoſe concerning ſuch only, as either miſplace the object, or miſtake the method of learning. But not only they who err in the placing of learning, or in the way to it, but even they who are right in both come under this cenſure; they all agree in purſuing it too importunately.

3. In order to make out the truth of this charge it will be neceſſary firſt to conſider, how far it becomes man to employ himſelf in the proſecution of knowledge; and then it will be eaſy to determine, whether our general purſuit of it be immoderate or no. Now for the determination of the former, let us obſerve the preſent ſtate of man, the poſture wherein he now ſtands.

4. And, Firſt, The utmoſt knowledge man can arrive at in this world, by his utmoſt endeavours, is very inconſiderable.

* God indeed has given us reaſon enough to diſtinguiſh us from the brute creation, and we may improve it ſo far, as to diſtinguiſh ourſelves from one another: and ſo one man may deſerve to be called learned and knowing, in compariſon of another that is leſs ſo. But abſolutely ſpeaking, the moſt that any or all of us either know or can know, is of little conſideration. What we know of God is but little; for as the apoſtle ſays, *We ſee through a glaſs darkly:* what we know of ourſelves perhaps is leſs, and what we know of the world about us, is not much. "We have

have ſeen but a few of God's works," and we underſtand yet fewer. There are almoſt an infinite number of things which we never ſo much as thought of: and of moſt things we conceive very darkly and uncertainly; and there is not one thing from the greateſt to the leaſt, which we do or can underſtand throughly. Thoſe that apply their whole ſtudy to any one thing, can never come to the end of that; for not only every ſcience, but every particular of each has its unmeaſurable depths and receſſes. 'Tis confeſt by a great enquirer into the nature of *antimony* (as 'tis related by Mr. *Boyle*) "That 'tis impoſſible for one man to underſtand throughly that ſingle mineral only." And if a man can't underſtand *all* of ſo *little*, how little muſt he underſtand of all? Suppoſe farther, that all the knowledge of all the learned were put together, it would weigh but light. For what one art or ſcience is there, that is brought to any tolerable perfection? And if the common ſtock be ſo little, how ſmall a pittance is it that muſt fall to every particular man's ſhare? And where is that man, who after all his poring and ſtudying, is able to anſwer all the queſtions, I will not ſay which God put to *Job*, but which may be aſked him by the next idiot he meets?

5. 'Tis ſuperfluous, as well as endleſs, to diſplay the particulars of our ignorance; though indeed, when all accounts are caſt up, that will be

be found to be our beſt knowledge. This only in general, our life is ſo ſhort, our progreſs in learning ſo ſlow, and learning itſelf ſo long and tedious, and what we do or can know ſo very little, that the ſceptics had much more reaſon to conclude from the diſability of our faculties, and the ſlightneſs of our attainments, than from the uncertainty and inſtability of truth, that there is no knowledge.

* 6. But, Secondly, If it were poſſible for us to attain a conſiderable meaſure of knowledge, yet our life is ſo ſhort and ſo encumbered, that we could make but little of the enjoyment of it. All the morning of our days is ſpent in the preliminaries of learning, in maſtering words and terms of art, wherein there is nothing but toil and drudgery. And before we can taſte any of the fruits of the tree of knowledge, before we can reliſh what is rational, our ſun is got into the meridian, and then it preſently begins to decline, and our learning with it. Our light, our ſtrength, and our time make haſte to conſume; nothing increaſes now but the ſhadows, that is, our ignorance and darkneſs of mind; and while we conſider and look about us, the ſun ſets, and all is concluded in the dark ſhadow of death. But often the ſun is intercepted by a cloud before it ſets, and we live backward again, grow weak and childiſh, ſilly and forgetful, and unlearn faſter than we learned. Or if it chance

to

to ſhine bright to the laſt, then we grow too wiſe for ourſelves, and reject the greateſt part of what we had learned before, as idle and inſignificant.

* 7. Thirdly, There is no neceſſity of being ſo wonderfully learned and knowing here. 'Tis neither neceſſary, as enjoined by God, nor as a means to any conſiderable end. We can be good and we can be happy without it. And leſt any advantages in our after-ſtate ſhould be alledged, this makes it more unneceſſary than any conſideration beſides. For though we are never ſo unlearned now, yet if we know enough to do our duty, we ſhall in a ſhort time arrive at ſuch a degree of knowledge as is requiſite to our ſupreme perfection, to which our preſent learning cannot add, and which our preſent ignorance will not diminiſh. Perhaps not immediately upon our diſcharge from the body, though even then there muſt be a vaſt enlargement of our underſtanding; but doubtleſs, when we are admitted to the viſion of God, we ſhall then commence inſtantaneouſly wiſe and learned, and be fully poſſeſt of the tree of knowledge, as well as of the tree of life. For then that glaſs, through which we now ſee darkly, ſhall be laid aſide, and the field of truth ſhall be clearly diſplayed before us. And though even then there ſhall be degrees of knowledge, yet the variety of this diſpenſation ſhall not proceed by the degree of our

our knowledge in this life, but by another measure. For,

8. Fourthly, Though there is no neceſſity of our being ſo learned and knowing, yet there is of our being good and virtuous. This is neceſſary, both as commanded by God, and as a means of our final perfection. And beſides, 'tis neceſſary now, there being no other opportunity for it. If we don't know here, we may know hereafter, and infallibly ſhall, if we are but good here. But if we are not good here, we ſhall neither be good, happy, nor knowing hereafter. The *main* opportunity for knowledge is *after* life; the *only* opportunity of being good is now: and if we take care to improve this, we are ſecure of the other; but if this is neglected, all is loſt. This therefore is indiſpenſably neceſſary; and 'tis the only thing that is ſo: and 'tis neceſſary now; neceſſary not only to our happineſs in general, but alſo to our intellectual happineſs in particular. For,

9. Laſtly, Thus ſtands the caſe between God and man. Man was made in a ſtate of innocence and perfection, in perfect favour and communion with God, his true good, and in a capacity ſo to continue. From this excellent ſtate he wilfully fell, and by his fall ſo diſabled himſelf, that he could not by his own ſtrength repent, and ſo provoked God, that though he could have repented, yet he could not have been pardoned, without ſatisfaction made to the divine

juſtice. This ſatisfaction man was not able to make, nor any other creature for him. Whereupon God in great mercy ordained a mediator, his own Son, God and man, between himſelf and his lapſed creature; who by the ſacrifice of himſelf ſhould effect two things, anſwerable to the double neceſſity of man: firſt, make repentance available, which otherwiſe would not have been ſo; and, ſecondly, merit grace for him, that he might be able to repent. And this is what is meant by the reſtoration or redemption of man, which thus far is univerſal and unconditional.

10. But ſtill, notwithſtanding all that this Mediator hath done for him, man is only ſo far *reſtored*, as to be put into a pardonable reconcileable ſtate: he is yet only in a capacity or poſſibility of pardon and reconciliation, which is then, and then only, reduced to act, when he truly believes, *i. e.* with ſuch a faith as is productive of all inward and outward holineſs; *with* which he may, *without* which he cannot be ſaved, notwithſtanding Chriſt hath died to ſave him. For the deſign of his death was not to make holineſs *unneceſſary*, but to make it *available*: not to procure a privilege of being ſaved *without* it, but that we might be ſaved *with* it. If this qualification be wanting, we ſhall be ſo far from being any thing advantaged from the redemption purchaſed by our Mediator, that we ſhall be accountable for it, to the great aggravation

tion both of our guilt and misery. It therefore highly concerns man to improve with all diligence this great and only opportunity, of adorning his mind with all Christian perfections; since *with* these, he may be happy, in all his capacities, and *without* them, he shall not only fall into a state of unutterable misery, but be also accountable for the possibility he had of escaping it, for perversely neglecting so great salvation, so glorious an opportunity of being saved.

11. These things being premised concerning the present state of man: First, That he can know but very little; Secondly, That the enjoyment of that little in a short and encumbered life, is by no means answerable to the labour of acquiring it; Thirdly, That there is no necessity of such a deal of learning and knowledge, either as to this world or the next, and that ere long he shall have his fill of knowledge in the beatific vision, one glance whereof shall instruct him more than an eternal poring on books, and *undistinguish* the greatest doctor from the most ignorant peasant; Fourthly, That there is an absolute necessity of his being holy, this being the condition not only of his happiness in general, but also of the accomplishment of his understanding in particular: and that now is the only opportunity for it: Lastly, That the attainment of happiness upon this condition, was the purchase of his Saviour's death, who has also merited grace for his assist-

ance in the performance of it; which if he neglect, he ſhall not only miſs of happineſs, but alſo be anſwerable for ſo dear an opportunity of gaining it: from theſe premiſes, it will, I think, follow with no leſs than mathematical evidence.

12. Firſt, That knowledge is not the thing for which God deſigned man in this ſtation, nor conſequently the end of his beſtowing upon him thoſe intellectual powers which he has.

Secondly, That the end for which God did deſign man in this ſtation, and the reaſon why he beſtowed thoſe powers upon him was, that he might ſo ſerve him here, as to be rewarded with perfect knowledge hereafter: And, Thirdly, That the principal care and concern of man, both for his own intereſt, and out of compliance with the deſign of God, ought to be, to live a Chriſtian life, to accompliſh the moral part of his nature, to ſubdue his paſſions, to wean himſelf from the love of the world, to ſtudy purity of heart and life, in one word, "To perfect "holineſs in the fear and love of God." And in particular, that he ought to purſue knowledge no farther than as 'tis conducive to virtue.

* 13. This therefore is the meaſure to be always obſerved, in our proſecution of knowledge. We are to ſtudy only, that we may be good, and conſequently to proſecute ſuch knowledge

ledge only as has an aptneſs to make us ſo, that which the apoſtle calls, *The truth which is after godlineſs*. Whatever knowledge we proſecute beſide this, or further than 'tis conducive to this end, though it be, abſolutely conſidered, never ſo excellent and perfective of our underſtanding, yet with reſpect to the preſent poſture and ſtation of man, 'tis a culpable curioſity, an unaccountable vanity, and only a more ſolemn and laborious way of being idle and impertinent.

14. And this will be found, if well examined, to be nothing different from the cenſure of the wiſe preacher, *I gave my heart to know wiſdom*, ſays he, *and I perceived, that this alſo is vanity and vexation of ſpirit*. Not that he now firſt applied himſelf to the ſtudy of wiſdom. No, he had been inſpired with that before, and by the help of it had diſcovered the vanity of all other things. But that wiſdom which ſaw thro' all other things, did not as yet perceive the vanity of itſelf. He therefore now gave his heart to *know* wiſdom, that is, to reflect upon it, and to conſider whether this might be excepted from his general cenſure, and ſtruck out of the ſcroll of vanities. And upon deep reflection, he found that it could not, and that even this alſo was as much a vanity as any of the reſt. Not that this propoſition is to be underſtood abſolutely, but with reſpect to the preſent poſture of man. Neither can it be underſtood of all

knowledge even in this life; ſome knowledge being neceſſary to qualify him for happineſs in the next. It muſt therefore be underſtood of all that knowledge, which contributes not to that great end. So that with theſe two neceſſary limitations, the ſenſe of it is plainly this, that to man in this preſent juncture, all knowledge which does not contribute to the intereſt of his after-ſtate, is vanity and vexation of ſpirit.

* 15. For to what purpoſe ſhould we ſtudy ſo much, ſince after all we can know ſo little? Since our life is as much too ſhort for enjoying that little knowledge we *have*, as for compaſſing what we would *have*; and withal, ſince there lies no manner of obligation or neceſſity upon us to do thus? But (which is what I would moſt of all inculcate) to what purpoſe imaginable ſhould we be ſo vehement in the purſuit of learning, of any learning but what is of uſe to the conduct of life, conſidering theſe two things, Firſt, That 'tis but to ſtay a little while, and we ſhall have all that knowledge gratis, which we ſo unſucceſsfully drudge for here, to the neglect of more important exerciſes; and, Secondly, That there is ſuch an abſolute neceſſity of being good, and that this ſhort uncertain life is the only time for it, which if neglected, this great work muſt be undone for ever. Upon the former conſideration, this ſtudious bookiſh humour, is like laying out a great ſum of money, to purchaſe an eſtate

eſtate which, after one weak, dropping life will of courſe fall into hand. Upon the latter, 'tis as if a man that was riding poſt upon buſineſs of life and death, ſhould, as he paſſes through a wood, ſtand ſtill to liſten to the ſinging of a nightingale, and ſo forget the only buſineſs of his journey.

16. 'Tis moſt certain, the caſes here ſuppoſed are as great inſtances of folly as can well be conceived. And yet (however it comes to paſs that we are not ſenſible of it,) 'tis equally certain that we do the very ſame, that we are too much concerned in the application; and that to moſt of us it may be truly ſaid, *Thou art the man!*

17. For what difference is there between him who now labours and toils for that knowledge, which in a little time he ſhall be eaſily and fully poſſeſſed of, and him that dearly buys an eſtate, which would otherwiſe come to him after a ſhort interval? Only this; that he who buys the eſtate, though he might have ſpared his money, however gets what he laid it out for. His expence indeed was *needleſs*, but not in *vain*. Whereas he that drudges in the purſuit of knowledge, not only toils for that which in a ſhort time he ſhall have, and in abundance, but which after all he can't compaſs, and ſo undergoes a *vain* as well as *needleſs* labour.

* 18. Again, What difference is there between him, who when he is upon buſineſs of

life and death, shall alight from his horse, and stand to hear a nightingale sing, and him who having an eternity of happiness to secure, and only this point of time to do it in, shall yet turn virtuoso, and set up for learning and curiosity? 'Tis true the nightingale sings well, and 'twere worth while to stand still and hear her, were I disengaged from more concerning affairs; but not when I am upon life and death. And so knowledge is an excellent thing, and would deserve my study and time, had I any to spare; but not when I have so great an interest as that of my final state depending upon the good use of it. My business *now* is not to be learned, but to be good.

* 19. For is my life so long, am I so *overstocked* with time, or is my depending interest so little, or so easily secured, that I can find leisure for unnecessary curiosities? Is this conduct agreeable to the present posture of man, whose entrance into this world, and whose whole stay in it is purely in order to another state? Or would any one imagine this to be the condition of man by such a conduct? Shall a prisoner, who has but a few days allowed him to make a preparation for his trial, spend that little opportunity in *cutting* and *carving*, and such like mechanical contrivances? Or would any one imagine such a man to be in such a condition, near a doubtful trial of life and death, whom coming into a prison he should find so employed? And yet is there

there any thing more abſurd in this, than to have a man, who has ſo great a concern upon his hands, as the preparing for eternity, all buſy and taken up with quadrants and teleſcopes, furnaces, ſyphons and air-pumps?

20. When we would expoſe any ſignal impertinence, we commonly illuſtrate it by the example of *Archimedes*; who was buſy in making mathematical figures on the ſands of *Syracuſe*, while the city was ſtormed by *Marcellus*, and ſo, tho' particular orders were given for his ſafety, loſt his life by his unſeaſonable ſtudy. Now, I confeſs there was abſurdity enough in this inſtance, to conſign it over to poſterity: but had *Archimedes* been a Chriſtian, I ſhould have ſaid, that the main of his impertinence did not lie *here*, in being mathematically employed when the enemy was taking the city, but in laying out his thoughts and time in ſo unconcerning a ſtudy, while he had no leſs a concern upon him, than the ſecuring his eternal intereſt, which muſt be done now or never. Nothing certainly is an impertinence if this be not, to hunt after knowledge in ſuch a juncture as this!

21. Many other proceedings in the conduct of life, are condemned as vanity and impertinence, though not half ſo inconſiſtent with the character of man, nor ſo diſagreeable to his preſent poſture. The pens of moral writers have been

all along employed againſt them who ſpent their ſhort and uncertain lives, which ought to be ſpent in purſuing an infinitely higher intereſt, in gaping up and down after honour and preferments, in long and frequent attendances at court, in raiſing families, in getting eſtates, and the like. Theſe are condemned not only for their particular viciouſneſs, as crimes of ambition and covetouſneſs, but for what they have all in common, as they are miſſpendings of time, and unconcerning employments.

22. Now I would fain know, whether any of theſe be more expenſive of our time, more remote from the main buſineſs of life, and conſequently more impertinent, than to be buſily employed in the niceties and curioſities of learning? And whether a man that loiters away ſix weeks in court-attendances, be not every whit as *accountably* employed, as he that ſpends the ſame time in ſolving a mathematical queſtion, as Mr. *Des Cartes* in one of his epiſtles confeſſes himſelf to have done? Why ſhould the profecution of learning be the only thing excepted from the vanities and impertinences of life?

23. And yet ſo it is. All other unconcerning employments are cried down merely for being ſo, as not conſiſtent with the preſent ſtate of man, with the character he now bears. This alone is not content with the reputation of innocence,

nocence, but ſtands for poſitive merit and excellence. To ſay a man is a lover of knowledge, and a diligent enquirer after truth, is thought almoſt as great an encomium as you can give him; and the time ſpent in the ſtudy, though in the ſearch of the moſt impertinent truth, is reckoned almoſt as laudably employed as that in the chapel. 'Tis learning only that is allowed (ſo inconſiſtent with itſelf is human judgment) not only to divide, but to devour the greateſt part of our ſhort life; and that is the only thing which with credit and public allowance ſtands in competition with the ſtudy of virtue: nay, by the moſt is preferred before it, who had rather be accounted learned than pious.

*24. But is not this a ſtrange competition? We confeſs that knowledge is a glorious excellence. Yet rectitude of will is a far greater excellence than brightneſs of underſtanding: and to be good, is a more glorious perfection than to be wiſe. and knowing, this being if not the only, certainly the principal difference between an angel and a devil. *'Tis far better*, to uſe the expreſſion of Mr. *Poiret, like an infant without much reaſoning, to love much; than like the devil, to reaſon much without love.*

25. But ſuppoſe knowledge were a more glorious excellence than it is; ſuppoſe it were a greater perfection than virtue; yet ſtill this competition would be utterly againſt reaſon; ſince

we can't have the former now *in any measure*, and shall have it hereafter *without measure:* but the latter we may have *now* (for we may *love much* tho' we cannot *know much*) and can't have it *hereafter*. Now the question is, whether we ought to be more solicitious for that intellectual perfection, which we can't have *here* and shall have *hereafter*; or that moral perfection, which we may have *here*, and cannot have *hereafter?* And I think we need not consult an oracle, or conjure up a spirit, to be resolved.

* 26. This consideration alone is sufficient to justify the measure we have prescribed for our intellectual conduct, that we ought to prosecute knowledge no farther than as it conduces to virtue: and consequently, that whenever we study to any other purpose, or in any other degree than this, we are unaccountably, impertinently, I may add, sinfully imployed. For this is the whole of man, *To fear God and keep his commandments*, the whole of man in this station particularly, and consequently this ought to be the scope of all his studies and endeavours.

27. And accordingly it is observable, that the scripture, whenever it makes mention of wisdom, with any mark of commendation, always means by it either religion itself, or such knowledge as has a direct influence upon it. Remarkable to this purpose is the 28th chapter of *Job*; where having run thro' several instances of natural knowledge, he adds, *But where shall wisdom be found, and*

where

where is the place of underſtanding? As much as to ſay, that in none of the other things mentioned, did conſiſt the wiſdom of man. Then it follows, *Man knoweth not the price thereof, neither is it found in the land of the living. The depth ſaith, It is not in me, and the ſea ſaith, It is not in me.* Not in the depths of learning, nor in the receſſes of ſpeculation, *Seeing it is hid from the eyes of all living. Deſtruction and death ſay we have heard of the fame thereof with our ears:* as much as to ſay, that after this life, and then only, unleſs perhaps about the hour of death, men begin to have a true ſenſe and lively reliſh of this wiſdom. But in the mean time, *God underſtandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof.* And unto man he ſaid, *Behold, the fear of the Lord that is wiſdom, and to depart from evil, that is underſtanding!* To man he ſaid: had it been to another creature, ſuppoſe an angel, in a ſtate of ſecurity and confirmation, he would perhaps have recommended for wiſdom the ſtudy of nature, and the arcana of philoſophy. But having to do with man, a probationary, unfixed creature, that ſhall be either happy or miſerable eternally, according as he demeans himſelf, in this ſhort time of trial, the only wiſdom he adviſes to ſuch a creature in ſuch a ſtation, is to ſtudy religion and a good life.

28. From authority let us deſcend to example: and two I would particularly recommend, of men both eminently wiſe and learned; I mean *Moſes* and

and St. *Paul*. The latter profeſſedly declares, *I determine to know nothing but Jeſus Chriſt and him crucified*. And the former complaining of the groſs ignorance of his people, breaks out into this paſſionate wiſh. *O that they were wiſe! that they underſtood this, that they would conſider their latter end!*

29. *Moſes* had been bred a ſcholar as well as a courtier, and was well inſtructed in all the ſecrets of philoſophy. And beſides the advantages of *Pharaoh*'s court, he had God himſelf for his tutor; he had converſed perſonally with his maker, and therefore muſt needs be ſuppoſed to know what was true wiſdom. But he does not make it conſiſt in courtly education, or the myſteries of philoſophy; but in conſidering our latter end. He wiſhes that his people were wiſe; and to this end does not wiſh, that they were as well-bred, or as learned as himſelf, but only that they underſtood this, this one thing, that they would conſider their latter end. This he makes the ſummary and abſtract of all wiſdom. Not unlike *Plato*, who defines philoſophy, *the theory of death*.

30. And here, if a ſhort digreſſion may be diſpenſed with, I would obſerve, how much *Plato* is in the right, and what an excellent part of wiſdom it is, to conſider death ſeriouſly. To make this diſtinctly appear, I ſhall ſhew firſt, that the conſideration of death is the moſt proper exerciſe for a wiſe man, and ſecondly, that it is the moſt compendious way of making him wiſe that is not ſo.

31. Firſt,

31. First, It is the most proper exercise for a wise man. Wisdom consists in a due estimation of things; which then are duly estimated, when they are rated, both as they are in themselves, and as they are in relation to us. If they are great and extraordinary in themselves, they deserve to be considered for their own sakes; if they nearly relate to us, they deserve to be considered for ours. And on both these accounts, death and its consequences, are highly deserving a wise man's thoughts.

32. For, first, they are in themselves great and extraordinary transactions, and as such, deserve the attentive consideration, even of a stander by, of any other indifferent being, suppose an angel; even though he were no otherwise concerned in it, than as 'tis a great event, a noble and wonderful scene of providence. On this single account, death is as fit a subject for the contemplation of a wise man, as any in nature.

33. Or if there be within the sphere of nature, things of a greater appearance, yet there is none wherein man is so nearly concerned. Since on this depends his eternal happiness or ruin. Nothing deserves so much to be considered by him, whether therefore we regard the greatness of the thing itself, or its greatness with respect to us, the consideration of death is as proper an exercise as a wise man can be employed in.

34. And as 'tis so fit an employment for him that

that is wise already, so, secondly, it is the most compendious way of making him wise that is not so. For all wisdom is in order to happiness; and to be truly wise, is to be wise unto salvation. Whatever knowledge contributes not to this, is quite besides the mark. It is, as the apostle calls it, *Science falsely so called.* The knowledge itself is vain, and the study of it impertinent.

35. Now the only way to happiness is a good life; and consequently all wisdom being in order to happiness, that is the true, and the only true wisdom, that serves to the promoting it. That therefore is the most compendious way of making a man wise, which soonest makes him good. And nothing does this so soon and so well, as the serious and habitual consideration of death. And therefore says the wise man, *remember death and corruption, and keep the commandments:* The shortest compendium of holy living that ever was given. As if he had said, many are the admonitions of wise and good men, for the moral conduct of life. But would you have a short and infallible direction? Remember death and corruption. Do but remember this, and forget all other rules if you *will*, and your duty if you *can*.

36. And what is here remarked by one wise man, is consented to by all. Hence that common practice among the antients, of placing sepulchres in their gardens, and of using that celebrated

celebrated motto, *Memento mori.* Hence that modern as well as antient cuſtom, of putting emblems of mortality in churches and other public places: by all which is implied, that the conſideration of death is the greateſt ſecurity of a good life. Indeed what other conſiderations do by parts, this does at a blow. It at once defeats the world, the fleſh, and the devil. For how can the world captivate him, who ſeriouſly conſiders that he is a ſtranger in it, and ſhall ſhortly leave it? How can the fleſh inſnare him, who has his ſepulchre in his eye, and reflects on the cold lodging he ſhall have there? And how can the devil prevail on him, who remembers that he ſhall die, and then enter on an unchangable ſtate of happineſs or miſery, according as he has either reſiſted, or yielded to his temptations? Of ſo vaſt conſequence is the conſtant thinking upon death, above all other, even practical meditation: and ſo great reaſon had *Moſes* for placing the wiſdom of man in the conſideration of his latter end.

* 37. But to return. I now perſuade myſelf, that from the character of man, and his preſent circumſtances, as well as from divine authority, it evidently appears, that however natural our deſire of knowledge is, this appetite is to be governed, as well as thoſe that are ſenſual; that we ought to indulge it only ſo far, as may tend to the conducting our lives, and the fitting us for

for that happineſs which God hath promiſed, not to the learned, but to the good: and that if it be gratified to any other purpoſe, or in any other meaſure than this, our curioſity is impertinent, our ſtudy immoderate, and the tree of knowledge ſtill a forbidden plant.

38. And now having ſtated the meaſure of our affection to, and enquiry after learning and knowledge, it remains to be conſidered, how much 'tis obſerved in the general conduct of our ſtudies. 'Tis plain, it is not obſerved at all. For theſe two things are notorious: Firſt, That very little of what is generally ſtudied, has any tendency to living *well* here or happily hereafter. And, Secondly, That theſe very ſtudies which have no religious influence upon life, do yet devour the greateſt part of it. The beſt and moſt of our time is devoted to dry learning; this we make the courſe of our ſtudy, the reſt is only by the by. And 'tis well if what is practical or devotional, can find us at leiſure upon a broken piece of a Sunday or holiday. The main current of our life runs in ſtudies of another nature, that don't ſo much as glance one kind of aſpect upon good living. Nay, 'tis well if ſome of them don't hinder it. I am ſure ſo great and ſo good a man as St. *Auſtin* thought ſo, who ſpeaking of the inſtitution and diſcipline of his youth, has theſe remarkable words, "*I learnt in thoſe things many uſeful words; but the ſame might have been learnt*

in

in matters that are not vain: and that indeed is the safe way, wherein children ought to be trained up. But wo unto thee thou torrent of custom! *Who is able to resist thee! How long will it be before thou art dried up? How long wilt thou roll along the sons of* Eve, *into a great and formidable sea, which they can hardly pass over? Have I not, in obedience to thee, read of* Jupiter *thundring and fornicating at the same time? And yet, O thou hellish torrent, the sons of men are still tossed in thee, and are invited by rewards to learn these things! The pretence indeed is, that this is the way to learn words, and to get eloquence and the art of perfuasion. As if we might not have known these words,* Golden Shower, lap, *the temple of* heaven, *without reading of* Jupiter's *being made a precedent for whoring? This immorality does not at all help the learning of the words: but the words greatly encourage the committing the immorality. Not that I find fault with the words themselves; they are pure and choice vessels: but with that wine of error, which in them is handed and commended to us by our sottish teachers. And yet unless we drank of it, we were beaten, nor had we any sober judge to appeal to. And yet, I, O my God, in whose presence I now securely make this recollection, willingly learnt these things, and like a wretch delighted in them, and for this I was called a* good, hopeful boy." By this you may see what the judgment of this holy and venerable

ble perſon was in his private retirements, and at the moſt ſerious intervals of his life, concerning the general courſe of thoſe ſtudies, which draw out the firſt runnings of our age, and which are of ſo great credit and authority in the world, as to go under the name of ingenious and liberal education. You ſee he not only diſapproves them, but reckons them among thoſe ſins and irregularities of his youth, whereof he thought himſelf obliged to make a particular confeſſion in this his great penetential.

39. And here let me not be thought immodeſt, if upon great conſideration and full conviction, I preſume to tax the management of our publick ſchools. Many miſcarriages I might note, but I ſhall concern myſelf only with thoſe, which the principles here laid down lead me to conſider. And theſe we may comprehend under two general heads of complaint.

I. That they take up ſo much of our time.

II. That they teach us ſuch frivolous and unprofitable things as they do.

In relation to the firſt, I can't with any patience reflect, that out of ſo ſhort a time as that of human life, conſiſting, it may be of 50 or 60 years (for where one lives longer, hundreds come ſhort) 19 or 20 ſhall be ſpent between the dictionary

tionary and the lexicon, in hammering out a little *Latin* and *Greek*, and in learning a company of poetical fictions and fantaſtick ſtories. Were theſe things worth knowing, yet 'tis barbarous and inhuman, to make people ſpend ſo much of their little ſtock of time upon them. This is to *make a cure* of human ignorance, and to deal with the infirmities of the mind, as ſome ill ſurgeons do with the wounds of the body. If one were to judge of the life of man by the proportion of it ſpent at ſchool, one would think the *Antidiluvian* mark were not yet out, and that we had a proſpect of at leaſt 900 or 1000 years before us. The truth is, 'tis an intolerable abuſe it ſhould be ſo; and were the age as wiſe as it pretends to be, it would never ſuffer it: eſpecially conſidering what late examples we have had of more compendious methods beyond the ſeas. It does not become me to project a ſcheme of ſchool-diſcipline; I leave this to abler heads. Only in the mean time I may venture to ſay, that the common way is a very great tax upon human life; ſo large a portion of which can very ill be ſpared, to be laviſhed away in the firſt elements of learning.

* But the greateſt complaint againſt theſe ſeminaries is, the frivolouſneſs of the things they teach. Not only the ſpending ſo much time on the things they teach is blame-worthy, but their teaching ſuch things at all. Setting opinion and fancy aſide, what real improvement is it to

the mind of a rational creature, to be overlaid with words and phraſes, and to be full charged with poetical ſtories and dreams? How many excellent and uſeful things might be learnt, while boys are *thumbing* and *murdering Heſiod* and *Homer*, which when they do not underſtand, and which when they do, they will throw by and deſpiſe? And that juſtly too: for of what ſignification is ſuch ſtuff as this, to the accompliſhment of a reaſonable ſoul? What improvement can it be to my underſtanding, to know the amours of *Pyramus* and *Thiſbe*, or of *Hero* and *Leander?* Do men retain any value for theſe things, when they grow up, or endeavour to preſerve the memory of them? And why muſt poor boys condemned to the drudgery of learning what when they are men they muſt and will unlearn? Why muſt they be forced with ſo great expence of time and labour, to learn ſuch things as are of no ſtanding uſe? So that, they are dangerous, as well as unprofitable. For I appeal to the common ſenſe and experience of mankind, whether it be not dangerous in the higheſt degree, to entertain the gay catching fancies of boys, with the amorous ſcenes of the poets? Whether it be ſafe, to ſeaſon their green imaginations with ſuch images as are there painted to the life? Is not this rather the direct way to corrupt them, to ſow in their tender minds the ſeeds of impurity, to increaſe their inbred propenſities to evil, and lay a ſtanding foundation

for

for debauchery? Let any man but consider human nature as it comes down to us from *Adam*, and tell me whether he thinks a boy is fit to be trusted with *Ovid?* I do not understand upon what principle, either of prudence or piety, such books as these should be read by any; but least of all by boys, whose soft minds are so susceptible of any ill impression. Far better were it they should continue ignorant, than that their understandings should be accomplished at the hazard of their morals; upon which such studies as these can derive no very wholsome influence. And yet to these our youth is dedicated, and in these some of us employ our riper years, and when we die, this very thing makes one part of our funeral eulogy, that we were so diligent and indefatigable in our studies, and so inquisitive in the search of knowledge, perhaps that we procured an early interment by it; when, according to the principles before laid down, we were as impertinently, though not so innocently employed all the while, as if we had been so long picking straws in *Bedlam*.

40. The sum of all this is: the measure of prosecuting learning and knowledge, is their usefulness to a good life. Consequently, all prosecution of them beyond or beside this end, is impertinent and immoderate. But such is the general prosecution of learning and knowledge, as is plain by appealing to the general conduct of study. It evidently follows, that the intellectual

tual conduct of human life is justly chargeable with an immoderate and impertinent pursuit of knowledge.

The CONCLUSION.

TO what a narrow compass, by virtue of the preceding reflections, are these three things reduced, which use to take up so large a room, *viz.* Learning itself, the method of learning, and the desire and prosecution of learning? These indeed are great retrenchments, but such as are just and necessary to the regulation of our intellectual conduct.

And now who can forbear making these two observations, 1. That this bookish humour, which every where so prevails, is one of the spiritual diseases of mankind, one of the most malignant relics of original depravation: it carrying in it the very stamp and signature of *Adam*'s transgression, which owed its birth to an inordinate desire of knowledge. 2. That those who have eyes, may in great measure spare them, and they who have not, should not much lament the want of them, upon account of learning.

For my own part, I am so thoroughly convinced of the certainty of the principles here laid down, that I look upon myself as not only under a particular obligation, but almost a neces-

sity

ſity of conducting my ſtudies by them. The laſt of which has left ſuch a deep impreſſion upon me, that I now intend to follow the advice of the Heathen, (*Marcus Antoninus*, as I remember) Τὴν τῶν βιβλίων ἀπαλλαγὴν ἔχειν. *Rid thyſelf of the thirſt after books*; and to ſtudy nothing at all but what ſerves to the advancement of piety and a good life.

I have now ſpent about 13 years in the moſt celebrated univerſity in the world; in purſuing both ſuch learning as the *academical* ſtandard requires, and as my private genius inclined me to. But in truth, when I think on my paſt intellectual conduct, I am as little ſatisfied with it as with my moral; being very conſcious, that the greateſt part of my time has been employed in unconcerning curioſities, ſuch as derive no degree of moral influence upon the ſoul that contemplates them.

But I have now a very different apprehenſion of things, and intend to ſpend my uncertain remainder of time, in ſtudying only what makes for the moral improvement of my mind, and regulation of my life: being not able to give an account, upon any rational and conſiſtent principles, why I ſhould ſtudy any thing elſe.

More particularly, I ſhall apply myſelf to read ſuch books as are rather perſuaſive than inſtructive; ſuch as warm, kindle, and enlarge the affections, and awaken the divine ſenſe in the ſoul; as being convinced by every day's experi-

ence, that I have more need of heat than of light. Though were I for more light, ſtill I think this would prove the beſt method of illumination, and that when all is done the love of God is the beſt light of the ſoul. *A man may indeed have knowledge without love; but he that loves, though he want ſciences humanly acquired, yet he will know more than human wiſdom can teach him, becauſe he has that maſter within him who teacheth man knowledge.*

THE

THE LIFE OF GOD

In the SOUL of MAN.

Miſtakes about religion.

1. I CANNOT ſpeak of religion, but I muſt lament, that among ſo many pretenders to it, ſo few underſtand what it means; ſome placing it in the underſtanding, in orthodox notions and opinions; and all the account they can give of their religion is, that they are of this, or the other perſuaſion, and have joined themſelves to one of thoſe many ſects whereinto Chriſtendom is moſt unhappily divided: others place it in a conſtant courſe of external duties, and a model of performances; if they live peaceably with their neighbours, keep a temperate diet, obſerve the returns of worſhip, frequenting the church, or their cloſet, and ſometimes extend their hands to the relief of the poor, they think they

have sufficiently acquitted themselves: others again put all religion in rapturous heats, and all they aim at is, to pray with passion, and to be affected with those kind and melting expressions wherewith they court their Saviour, till they persuade themselves that they are mightily in love with him. Thus are these things, which have any resemblance of piety, and, at best, are but means for obtaining it, or particular exercises of it, frequently mistaken for the whole of religion; nay, sometimes wickedness and vice pretend to that name. I speak not now of those gross impieties wherewith the Heathens were wont to worship their gods: there are but too many Christians, who would consecrate their vices, and hallow their corrupt affections; whose rugged humour and sullen pride, must pass for Christian severity; whose fierce wrath, and bitter rage against their enemies, must be called holy zeal; whose petulancy towards their superiors, or rebellion against their governors, must have the name of Christian courage and resolution.

What religion is.

2. But certainly religion is quite another thing; and they who are acquainted with it, will entertain far different thoughts, and disdain all those shadows of it. They know, by experience, that true religion is an union of the soul with God; a real participation of the divine nature; or, in the apostle's phrase, *Christ formed within us.*

Briefly,

Briefly, I know not how the nature of religion can be more fully expreſſed, than by calling it a *divine life*; and, under theſe terms, I ſhall diſcourſe of it, ſhewing firſt, how it is called a *life*, and then how it is termed *divine*.

Its permanency and ſtability.

3. I chooſe to expreſs it by the name of *life*, firſt, becauſe of its permanency and ſtability. Religion is not a ſudden ſtart or paſſion; tho' it tranſport a man to extraordinary performances. There are few but have convictions of the neceſſity of doing ſomething for the ſalvation of their ſouls, which may puſh them forwards ſome ſteps with a great deal of haſte; but anon, they flag and give over; they did ſhoot forth, freſh and high, but are quickly withered, becauſe they had no root in themſelves. Theſe ſudden fits may be compared to the convulſive motions of bodies newly beheaded; which, however violent and impetuous, can be of no long continuance: whereas the motions of holy ſouls are conſtant and regular, proceeding from a permanent and lively principle. It is true this divine life continueth not always in the ſame ſtrength and vigour, yet it is not extinguiſhed; nor are holy men abandoned to the power of thoſe corrupt affections, which ſway the reſt of the world.

Its freedom and unconſtrainedneſs.

4. Again, religion may be termed *life*, becauſe it is an inward, free, and ſelf-moving principle;

and thoſe who have it, are not acted only by external motives, driven merely by threatnings, nor bribed by promiſes, nor conſtrained by laws; but are powerfully inclined to that which is good, and delight in the performance of it. The love which a pious man bears to God, and goodneſs, is not ſo much by virtue of a command enjoining it as by a new nature prompting him to it; nor doth he pay his devotions as a tribute, to appeaſe the divine juſtice; but theſe religious exercifes are the proper emanations of the divine life, the natural employments of a new-born ſoul. He prays, and gives thanks, and repents not only becauſe theſe things are commanded, but becauſe he is ſenſible of his wants, and of the divine goodneſs, and of the folly and miſery of a ſinful life. His charity is not forced, nor his alms extorted from him; his love makes him willing to give, and, though there were no outward obligations, his *heart would deviſe liberal things*. Injuſtice, or intemperance, and all other vices, are as contrary to his temper, as the baſeſt actions to the moſt generous ſpirit: ſo that I may well ſay with St. *John*, *Whoſoever is born of God doth not commit ſin: for his ſeed remaineth in him, and he cannot ſin, becauſe he is born of God*.† Though religious perſons do much eye the law of God, and have a great regard unto it, yet it is not ſo much the ſanction of the law, as its purity

† 1 John iii. 9.

purity and goodneſs, which prevail with them. They account it excellent and deſirable in itſelf; and that in keeping of it there is great reward. And that divine love wherewith they are acted, makes them become a law unto themſelves.

Quis legem det amantibus?
Major eſt amor lex ipſe ſibi.

Who ſhall preſcribe a law to thoſe that love?
Love's a more powerful law, which doth them move.

5. In a word, what our bleſſed Saviour ſaid of himſelf, is, in ſome meaſure, applicable to his followers, that it is their *meat and drink to do their Father's will.*† And as the natural appetite is carried out towards food, though we ſhould not reflect on the neceſſity of it; ſo are they carried, with a natural and unforced propenſion toward that which is good and commendable. It is true, external motives are of great uſe to ſtir up this inward principle, eſpecially in its infancy; when 'tis often ſo languid, that the man himſelf can ſcarce diſcern it, hardly being able to move one ſtep forward, but when he is puſhed by his hopes, or his fears; by the preſſure of an affliction, or the ſenſe of a mercy; by the authority of the law, or the perſuaſion of others: yet, if ſuch a perſon be conſcientious and uniform in his obedience, and earneſtly groaning under the ſenſe of his dulneſs, theſe

† John iv. 34.

are the firſt motions of the divine life; which, though it be faint and weak, will ſurely be cheriſhed by the influences of heaven, and grow unto greater maturity. But he who is utterly deſtitute of this inward principle, and contents himſelf with thoſe performances whereunto he is prompted by education or cuſtom, or the fear of hell, can no more be accounted a religious perſon, than a puppet can be called a man. This forced and artificial religion is commonly heavy and languid, like the motion of a weight forced upward. It is ſcant and niggardly, eſpecially in thoſe duties which do violence to mens inclinations; for thoſe ſlaviſh ſpirits will be ſure to do no more than is abſolutely required; 'tis a law that compels them, and they will be loth to go beyond what it ſtints them to; nay, they will ever be putting ſuch gloſſes on it, as may leave them the greateſt liberty. Whereas the ſpirit of true religion is frank and liberal, far from ſuch peeviſh and narrow reckonings; and he who hath given up himſelf entirely unto God, will never think he doth too much for him.

Religion a divine principle.

6. By this time, I hope, it appears, that religion is, with reaſon, termed *a life*, or vital principle; and that we are to diſtinguiſh betwixt it, and that obedience which is conſtrained, and depends upon external cauſes. I come next to give an account why I term it *a divine life:* and ſo it may be called, not only in regard of its fountain

fountain and original, having God for its author, and being wrought in the ſouls of men, by the power of his Holy Spirit; but alſo in regard of its nature, religion being a reſemblance of the divine perfections, the image of the Almighty ſhining in the ſoul of man: nay, it is a real participation of his nature, it is a beam of the eternal light, a drop of that infinite ocean of goodneſs; and they who are endued with it, may be ſaid to have *God dwelling in their ſouls, and Chriſt formed within them.*

What the natural life is.

7. Before I deſcend to a more particular conſideration of this, it will be fit to ſpeak a little of that natural or animal life which prevails in thoſe who are ſtrangers to the other: and by this I underſtand nothing elſe, but our inclination and propenſion towards thoſe things, which are pleaſing to nature; or ſelf-love iſſuing forth, and ſpreading itſelf into as many branches as men have ſeveral appetites and inclinations. The root and foundation of the animal life I reckon to be ſenſe, as it is oppoſed to faith, and importeth our perception of things, that are either grateful or troubleſome to us. Now theſe animal affections, as they are implanted in us by nature, are not vicious or blameable; nay, they are inſtances of the wiſdom of the Creator, furniſhing his creatures with ſuch appetites as tend to the preſervation and welfare of their lives. Theſe

are inſtead of a law to the brute beaſts, whereby they are directed towards the ends for which they were made. But man, being made for higher purpoſes, becomes criminal when he is tranſported by the inclinations of this lower life, to neglect the more noble deſigns of his creation. Our natural affections are not wholly to be deſtroyed, but to be over-ruled by a more excellent principle: and the difference betwixt a religious and wicked man is, that in the one the divine life bears ſway; in the other the animal prevails.

The different tendencies of the natural life.

8. But it is ſtrange to obſerve to what different courſes this natural principle carries thoſe who are guided by it, according to the divers circumſtances that concur with it to determine them. And the not conſidering this, frequently occaſions dangerous miſtakes, making men think well of themſelves, by reaſon of that ſeeming difference which is betwixt them and others. Whereas their actions all the while flow from one and the ſame original. If we conſider the natural temper of men, we find ſome airy, frolickſome, and light, which makes their behaviour extravagant and ridiculous; whereas others are ſerious and ſevere, and their whole carriage gains them reverence and eſteem. Some are of a rugged, and moroſe temper, and can neither be pleaſed themſelves, nor endure that others

ſhould

ſhould be ſo; while others have a ſweetneſs in their natures, and find the greateſt pleaſure in the endearments of ſociety, and the mutual complacency of friends. And it is well that nature hath provided this complectional tenderneſs, to ſupply the defect of true charity in the world, and to incline men to do ſomething for one anothers welfare. Again, in regard of education, ſome have never been taught to follow any other rules, than thoſe of pleaſure or advantage; but others are enured to obſerve the ſtricteſt rules of decency and honour.

9. In fine, it is no ſmall difference in the deportment of mere natural men that ariſes from the ſtrength or weakneſs of their judgment. Intemperance and luſt, injuſtice and oppreſſion, and all thoſe other impieties which abound in the world, are the effect of the *animal life* when it is neither over-powered by religion, nor governed by natural reaſon? But if it once take hold of reaſon, and get judgment to be of its party, it will diſdain groſs vice, and ſpring up unto fair imitations of virtue. But this is not all: this natural principle, by the help of reaſon, may take a higher flight, and come nigher to religion. It may incline a man to the diligent ſtudy of divine truths: for why ſhould not theſe, as well as other ſpeculations, be grateful to inquiſitive minds? It may make men zealous in maintaining and propagating ſuch opinions as they have eſpouſed. It may make them delight to

hear and compose excellent discourses about the matters of religion; for eloquence is very pleasant, whatever be the subject; nay, some it may dispose to a kind of devotion. The glorious things that are spoken of heaven; the similitudes made use of in scripture, of crowns and sceptres, and rivers of pleasure, may affect a man's fancy, and make him wish to be there, tho' he neither understand nor desire those spiritual pleasures which are shadowed forth by them: and when such a person believes that Christ has purchased those glorious things for him, he may feel a kind of tenderness and affection, and imagine he is mightily enamoured with him; and yet all the while continue a stranger to the holy temper and spirit of the blessed Jesus.

10. To conclude, there is nothing proper to make a man's life pleasant, or himself eminent in the world; but *this* natural principle, assisted by reason, may prompt him to it. And though I do not condemn these things in themselves; yet it concerns us nearly to know their nature, both that we may keep within bounds, and that we may learn never to value ourselves on the account of such attainments, nor lay the stress of religion upon our natural appetites or performances.

Wherein the divine life doth consist.

11. It is now time to return to the consideration of that *divine life*, that *life which is hid with Christ in God*, and therefore hath no glorious shew

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or appearance in the world, but to the natural man ſeems mean and inſipid. As the animal life conſiſts in that narrow love which is terminated on a man's ſelf, and in his propenſion to thoſe things that are pleaſing to nature; ſo the divine life ſtands in an univerſal affection, and in the maſtery over our natural inclinations. The root of the divine life is faith; the chief branches are, love to God, charity to man, purity and humility: for (as an excellent perſon obſerved) however theſe names be common and vulgar, yet do they carry ſuch a mighty ſenſe, that the tongue of man or angel can pronounce nothing more weighty or excellent. Faith hath the ſame place in the divine life, which ſenſe hath in the natural; being indeed a kind of ſenſe, or feeling perſuaſion of ſpiritual things: it extends itſelf unto all divine truths; but in our lapſed eſtate, it hath a peculiar relation to the declarations of God's mercy to ſinners thro' a Mediator; and therefore, receiving its denomination from that principal object, is ordinarily termed *faith in Jeſus Chriſt*.

12. The love of God is ſuch a delightful ſenſe of God's love to us, as makes the ſoul reſign itſelf wholly to him, deſiring above all things to pleaſe him, and delighting in nothing ſo much as in communion with him, and being ready to do or ſuffer any thing for his ſake. A ſoul thus poſſeſſed with divine love, muſt needs be enlarged towards all mankind in ſincere affection, becauſe

becauſe of the relation they have to God, being his creatures, and having ſomething of his image ſtamped upon them. And this is that *charity* I named as the ſecond branch of religion, and under which all the parts of juſtice, all the duties we owe to our neighbour, are eminently comprehended. For he who doth truly love all the world, will be nearly concerned in the intereſt of every one, and ſo far from wronging any perſon that he will reſent any evil that befals others, as if it happened to himſelf.

13. By *purity*, I underſtand ſuch a diſpoſition of mind, as makes a man deſpiſe and abſtain from all pleaſures of ſenſe or fancy, which either are ſinful in themſelves, or tend to extinguiſh or leſſen our reliſh of more divine and intellectual pleaſures. It doth alſo infer a reſoluteneſs to undergo all thoſe hardſhips he may meet with in the performance of his duty; ſo that not only charity and temperance, but alſo Chriſtian courage and magnanimity, may come under this head.

14. *Humility* imports a deep ſenſe of our inward and outward ſins, and of our utter helpleſſneſs; which is always accompanied with a profound ſubmiſſion to the will of God, and deadneſs to the applauſe of men.

Theſe are the higheſt perfections that men are capable of, the foundation of heaven laid in the ſoul; and he who hath attained them, needs not deſire to pry into the hidden rolls of God's decrees,

crees, to know what is determined about his everlasting condition, but he may find a copy of God's thoughts concerning him written in his own breast. Those beginnings of happiness which he feels in the conformity of the powers of his soul to the nature of God, are a sure pledge that his felicity shall be perfected, and continued to all eternity. And it is not without reason that one said, *I had rather see the real impressions of a godlike nature upon my own soul, than have a vision from heaven, or an angel sent to tell me, that my name was enrolled in the book of life.*

Religion better understood by actions than by words.

15. When we have said all we can, the secret mysteries of a divine life can never be sufficiently expressed: nor can they be truly understood but by those that have a sense and relish of spiritual things. *There is a spirit in man, and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth this understanding.* The power and life of religion may be better expressed in actions than in words: And therefore we may take the best measure of those gracious endowments, from the deportment of those in whom they reside; especially from the holy life of our blessed Saviour, a main part of whose business in this world was to teach by his practice what he required of others, and to make his own conversation an exact resemblance of those unparalleled rules which he prescribed: so that, if ever true goodness was visible to mortal eyes,

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it was when his presence beautified this lower world.

Divine love exemplified in our Saviour; his diligence in doing God's will; and his patience in bearing it.

16. That devout affection wherewith his blessed soul constantly burned towards his heavenly Father, expressed itself in an entire resignation to his will. It was his *very meat, to do the will, and finish the work of him that sent him.* This was the exercise of his childhood, and the constant employment of his riper age. He spared no pains while he was about his Father's business; but took such satisfaction in the performance of it, that, when being faint and weary with his journey, he rested on *Jacob*'s well, and intreated water of the *Samaritan* woman; the success of his conference with her, and the accession that was made to the kingdom of God, filled his mind with such delight, as seemed to redound to his very body, refreshing his spirits, and making him forget his thirst, and refuse the meat which he had sent his disciples to buy. Nor was he less patient and submissive in suffering the will of God, than diligent in doing of it. He endured the sharpest afflictions, and extremest miseries that ever were inflicted on any mortal, without a repining thought, or discontented word. For though he was far from a stupid insensibility, and had as quick a sense of pain as other men, and the deepest apprehension of what he

he was to ſuffer in his ſoul, (as his *bloody ſweat*, and the *ſore amazement and ſorrow* which he profeſſed, do abundantly declare) yet did he intirely ſubmit to that ſevere diſpenſation of providence, and willingly acquieſced in it.

His conſtant devotion.

17. Another inſtance of his love to God, was his delight in converſing with him by prayer; which made him frequently retire from the world, and ſpend whole nights in that heavenly exerciſe; though he had no ſins to confeſs, and but few ſecular intereſts to pray for: which, alas! are almoſt the only things that are wont to drive us to our devotions. Nay, we may ſay his whole life was prayer, a conſtant courſe of communion with God. If the ſacriſice was not always offering, yet was the fire ſtill kept alive. Nor was he ever ſurprized with that dulneſs of ſpirit which we muſt many times wreſtle with, before we can be fit for the exerciſe of devotion.

His charity to men.

18. In the ſecond place I ſhall ſpeak of love towards all men; but he who would expreſs it muſt tranſcribe the hiſtory of the goſpel: for ſcarce any thing is recorded to have been done or ſpoken by him, which was not deſigned for the good of ſome one or other. All his miraculous works were inſtances of his goodneſs, as well as his power, and they benefited thoſe on whom they were wrought, as well as amazed the beholders. His charity was not confined to his

kindred;

kindred, or relations; nor was all his kindneſs ſwallowed up in the endearments of that peculiar friendſhip which he carried toward the beloved diſciple. But every one was his *friend* who obeyed his *holy commands*, John xv. 4. and *Whoſoever did the will of his Father*, the ſame was to him as *his brother, and ſiſter, and mother*.

19. Never was any unwelcome to him, who came with an honeſt intention; nor did he deny any requeſt, which tended to the good of thoſe that aſked it: So that what was ſpoken of the *Roman* Emperor, whom, for his goodneſs, they called the *darling of mankind*, was really performed by him, that never any departed from him with a heavy countenance, except that rich youth, *Mark* x. who was ſorry to hear that the kingdom of heaven ſtood at ſo high a rate, and that he could not ſave his ſoul and his money too. The ingenuity that appeared in his firſt addreſs, had already procured ſome kindneſs for him; for it is ſaid, *And Jeſus beholding him, loved him*. But muſt he for his ſake cut out a new way to heaven, and alter the nature of things; which makes it impoſſible that a covetous man ſhould be happy?

His meekneſs.

20. And what ſhall I ſpeak of his meekneſs, who could encounter the monſtrous ingratitude of that miſcreant who betrayed him, in no harſher terms than theſe, *Judas betrayeſt thou the Son of man with a kiſs?* What further evidence could

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we desire of his fervent and unbounded charity, than that he willingly laid down his life for his most bitter enemies, and mingling his prayers with his blood, besought the Father that his death might not be laid to their charge, but might become the means of eternal life, to those very persons who procured it.

His purity,

21. The third branch of the divine life is *purity*, a neglect of worldly enjoyments and accommodations, and a resolute enduring of all such troubles as we meet with in the doing of our duty. Now surely if ever any person was wholly dead to all the pleasures of the natural life, it was the blessed Jesus; who seldom tasted them when they came in his way, but never stept out of his road to seek them. Though he allowed others the comforts of wedlock, and honoured marriage with his presence, yet he chose the severity of a virgin life: and though he supplied the want of wine with a miracle, yet he would not work one for the relief of his own hunger in the wilderness. So gracious was he in allowing others such gratifications, as himself thought good to abstain from, and supplying not only their pressing necessities, but also their less considerable wants. We many times hear of our Saviour's sighs, and groans, and tears, but never that he laughed, so that through his whole life he answered that character given of him by the prophet, *A man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.*

Nor

Nor were the troubles of his life other than matters of choice: for never did there any appear on the ſtage of the world with greater advantages to have raiſed himſelf to the higheſt fecular felicity. He who could bring together ſuch a prodigious number of fiſhes into his diſciples net, and at another time receive that tribute from a fiſh which he was to pay to the temple, might eaſily have made himſelf the richeſt perſon in the world; nay, without any money, he could have maintained an army powerful enough to have joſtled *Cæſar* out of his throne, having oftner than once fed ſeveral thouſands with a few loaves and ſmall fiſhes: but to ſhew how ſmall eſteem he had of all the enjoyments in the world, he choſe to live in ſo poor and mean a condition, that *though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had neſts, yet he, who was Lord of all things, had not where to lay his head.* He did not frequent the courts of princes, nor affect the acquaintance of great ones; but being reputed the ſon of a carpenter, he had fiſhermen, and other ſuch poor people, for his companions, and lived at ſuch a rate as ſuited with the meanneſs of that condition.

His humility.

22. And thus I am brought unawares to ſpeak of his *humility*, the laſt branch of the divine life, wherein he was a moſt eminent pattern to us, that we might *learn of him to be meek and lowly in heart.* I ſhall not now ſpeak of that infinite condeſcenſion

condescension of the eternal Son of God, in taking our nature upon him; but only reflect on his lowly deportment while he was in the world. He had none of those sins and imperfections, which may justly humble the best of men; yet he was so entirely swallowed up with a deep sense of the infinite perfections of God, that he appeared as nothing in his own eyes, I mean so far as he was a creature. He considered those eminent perfections which shined in his blessed soul as not his own, but the gifts of God; and therefore assumed nothing to himself for them, but with the profoundest humility renounced all pretences to them. Hence did he refuse that ordinary compellation of *good Master*, from one, who, it seems, was ignorant of his divinity: *Why callest thou me good? There is none good but God only.* As if he had said, "The goodness of any creature (and such only thou takest me to be) is not worthy to be named or taken notice of; it is God alone who is originally and essentially good." He never made use of his miraculous power for vanity or ostentation: he would not gratify the curiosity of the *Jews* with a sign from heaven, some prodigious appearance in the air; nor would he follow the advice of his countrymen and kindred, who would have had all his great works performed in the eyes of the world, for gaining him the greater fame. When his charity had prompted him to the relief of the miserable, his humility made him many times enjoin

enjoin the concealment of the miracle; and when the glory of God, and the design for which he came into the world, required the publication of them, he ascribed the honour of all to his Father, telling them, *That of himself he was able to do nothing.*

23. I cannot insist on all the instances of humility in his deportment towards men; his withdrawing himself when they would have made him a king; his subjection, not only to his blessed Mother, but to her husband, during his younger years, and his submission to all the indignities and affronts which his rude and malicious enemies put upon him: the history of his holy life, recorded by those who conversed with him, is full of such passages as these; and indeed the serious and attentive study of it, is the best way to get right measures of humility, and all the other parts of religion, which I have been endeavouring to describe.

Let me here subjoin a prayer that may be proper when one, who had formerly entertained some false notions of religion, begins to discover what it is.

A PRAYER.

INFINITE and eternal Majesty, author and fountain of being and blessedness, how little do we poor sinful creatures know of thee, or the way to serve and please thee? We talk of religion, and pretend

pretend unto it; but alas! How few are there that know what it means? How eaſily do we miſtake the affections of our nature, for thoſe divine graces which alone are acceptable in thy ſight? It may juſtly grieve me to conſider, that I ſhould have wandered ſo long, and contented myſelf ſo often with vain ſhadows of religion; yet I cannot but acknowledge and adore thy goodneſs, who haſt been pleaſed, in ſome meaſure, to open mine eyes, and let me ſee what it is at which I ought to aim. I rejoice to conſider what mighty improvements my nature is capable of, and what a divine temper doth ſhine in thoſe whom thou cauſeſt to approach thee. Bleſſed be thine infinite mercy, who ſenteſt thine own Son to dwell among men, and inſtructeſt them by his example, as well as his laws, giving them a perfect pattern of what they ought to be. O that the holy life of the bleſſed Jeſus may be always in my thoughts, till I receive a deep ſenſe and impreſſion of thoſe graces that ſhined ſo eminently in him; and let me never reſt, till that new and divine nature prevail in my ſoul, and Chriſt be formed within me.

The excellency and advantage of Religion.

1. AND now, having diſcovered the nature of true religion, let us fix our meditations a little on the excellency and advantages of it. But what words can expreſs that inward ſatisfaction, thoſe hidden pleaſures, which can never

never be rightly understood, but by those who feel them? *A stranger intermeddleth not with their joy* †. Holiness is the right temper, the vigorous and healthful constitution of the soul: its faculties had formerly been enfeebled and disordered, so that they could not exercise their natural functions; it had wearied itself with endless tossings and rollings, and was never able to find any rest. Now that distemper being removed, it feels itself well; there is a due harmony in its faculties, and a sprightly vigour possesseth every part: the understanding can discern what is good, and the will can cleave unto it; the affections are not tied to the motions of sense, and the influence of external objects; but are stirred by more divine impressions, are touched with a sense of invisible things.

The excellency of divine love.

2. Let us descend into a nearer view of religion, in the several branches of it named before. Let us consider that love wherewith holy souls are united to God, that we may see what excellency is involved in it. Love is that powerful passion, by which all the faculties of the soul are determined, and on which both its perfection and happiness depend. The worth and excellency of a soul is to be measured by the object of its love. He who loveth mean and sordid things, doth thereby become base and vile; but a noble and well placed affection advances the spirit to a conformity

† Prov. xiv. 10.

conformity with the perfections which it loves. The images of these frequently present to the mind, and, by a secret energy, insinuate into the very constitution of the soul, and mould and fashion it unto their own likeness. Hence we see how easily lovers or friends slide into the imitation of the persons whom they affect; and how, even before they are aware, they begin to resemble them, not only in the more considerable instances of their deportment, but also in their voice and gesture, and that which we call their mein and air: and certainly we should as well transcribe the inward beauties of the soul, if they were the object and motive of our love. But as all the creatures we converse with have their mixture and alloy, we are always in hazard to be corrupted by placing our affection on them: passion easily blinds our eyes, so that we first approve, and then imitate the things that are blameable in them. The true way to improve and ennoble our souls, is by fixing our love on the divine perfections, that we may have them always before us, and derive an impression of them on ourselves; and *beholding, with open face, the glory of the Lord, may be changed into the same image, from glory to glory.* He who hath raised his eyes towards that uncreated beauty and goodness, and fixed his affection there, is quite of another spirit, of a more excellent and heroic temper than the rest of the world; and cannot but infinitely disdain all mean and un-

worthy things, will not entertain any low or base thoughts, which might disparage his high and noble pretensions. Love is the greatest and most excellent thing we are masters of; and therefore it is folly and baseness to bestow it unworthily. It is indeed the only thing we can call our own; other things may be taken from us by violence, but none can ravish our love. If any thing else be counted ours, by giving our love, we give all, so far as we make over our hearts and wills, by which we possess our other enjoyments. It is not possible to refuse him any thing, to whom, by love, we have given ourselves; nay, since it is the privilege of gifts, to receive their value from the mind of the giver, and not to be measured by the event, but by the desire, he who loveth, may, in some sense, be said not only to bestow all that he hath, but all things else which may make the beloved person happy; since he doth heartily wish them, and would really give them, if they were in his power. Certainly therefore love is the worthiest present we can offer unto God, and it is extremely debased when we bestow it another way.

3. When this affection is misplaced, it doth often vent itself in such expressions, as point at its proper object. The blasphemous terms of adoration, wherein men sometimes express their passion, are the language of that affection which was designed for God; as he who is accustomed to speak to some great person, doth perhaps unawares accost

accoſt another with thoſe titles he was wont to give him: But certainly that paſſion which accounteth its object a Deity, ought to be beſtowed on him who really is ſo; thoſe unlimited ſubmiſſions, which debaſe the ſoul, if directed to any other, will exalt and ennoble it, when placed here. Thoſe chains and cords of love, are infinitely more glorious than liberty itſelf; this ſlavery is more noble than all the empires in the world.

The advantages of divine love.

4. Again, as divine love advances and elevates the ſoul, ſo it is that alone which can make it happy. The higheſt pleaſures, the moſt ſubſtantial delights, that human nature is capable of, are thoſe which ariſe from a well-placed and ſucceſsful affection. That which imbitters love, and makes it ordinarily a very troubleſome paſſion, is the placing it on thoſe who have not worth enough to deſerve it, or gratitude to requite it, or whoſe abſence may deprive us of their converſe, or their miſeries occaſion our trouble. To all theſe evils are they expoſed, whoſe chief affection is placed on creatures; but the love of God delivers us from them all.

The worth of the object.

5. Firſt, Love muſt needs be full of diſquietude, when there is not excellency in the object to anſwer the vaſtneſs of its capacity: So violent a paſſion cannot but torment the ſpirit when it finds not wherewith to ſatisfy its cravings; and in-

deed ſo large and unbounded is its nature: that it muſt be extremely ſtraitened, when confined to any creature: nothing below an infinite good can afford it room to ſtretch itſelf, and exert its vigour and activity. What is a little ſkin-deep beauty, or ſome ſmall degrees of goodneſs, to ſatisfy a paſſion which was made for God? No wonder lovers do ſo hardly ſuffer any rival, and do not deſire that others ſhould approve their paſſion by imitating it: They know the ſcantineſs of the good which they love, that it cannot ſuffice two, being in effect too little for one. Hence love, *which is ſtrong as death*, occaſioneth *jealouſy*, *which is cruel as the grave*; *the coals whereof are coals of fire, which hath a moſt violent flame.*

6. But divine love hath no mixture of this gall. When once the ſoul is fixed on that ſupreme good, it finds ſo much goodneſs, as doth not only ſatisfy its affection, but overpower it too: It finds all its love to be too languid for ſuch an object, and is only ſorry that it can command no more: It wiſhes for the flames of a *Seraph*, and longs for the time when it ſhall be wholly diſſolved in love. And becauſe it can do ſo little itſelf, it deſires the aſſiſtance of the whole creation, that angels and men would concur with it in the admiration and love of theſe infinite perfections.

The certainty to be beloved again.

7. Again, love is accompanied with trouble, when it miſſes a ſuitable return of affection. Love

Love is the moſt valuable thing we can beſtow, and by giving it, we in effect give all that we have: and therefore it muſt needs be afflicting, to find ſo great a gift deſpiſed; that the preſent which one hath made of his whole heart cannot obtain any return. Perfect love is a kind of wandering out of ourſelves; it is a ſort of voluntary death, wherein the lover dies to himſelf, and all his own intereſts; not thinking of them, nor caring for them; and minding nothing but how he may pleaſe the party whom he loves. Thus he is quite undone, unleſs he meets with reciprocal affection; he neglects himſelf, and the other hath no regard to him: But if he be beloved, he is revived, as it were, and liveth in the ſoul and care of the perſon whom he loves. And now he begins to mind his own concernments, not ſo much becauſe they are his, as becauſe the beloved is pleaſed to own an intereſt in them; he becomes dear unto himſelf, becauſe he is ſo unto the other.

8. And herein the divine lover hath unſpeakably the advantage, having placed his affection on him whoſe nature is love, whoſe goodneſs is as infinite as his being; whoſe mercy prevented us, when we were his enemies, therefore cannot chuſe but embrace us, when we are become his friends. It is impoſſible that God ſhould deny his love to a ſoul devoted to him, and which deſires nothing ſo much as to pleaſe him. He cannot diſdain his own image, nor the heart on which it is engraven. Love is all the tribute which we

can pay him, and it is the ſacrifice which he will not deſpiſe.

The preſence of the beloved perſon.

9. Another thing which diſturbs the pleaſure of love, and renders it a miſerable and unquiet paſſion, is abſence from thoſe we love. It is not without a ſenſible affliction that friends part, tho' for ſome little time: But if death have made the ſeparation, as ſome time or other it muſt, this occaſions a grief ſcarce to be parallel'd by all the misfortunes of human life. But, O how happy are thoſe who have placed their love on him, who can never be abſent from them! They need but open their eyes, and they ſhall every where behold the traces of his preſence and glory, and converſe with him whom their ſoul loveth; and this makes the darkeſt priſon, or wildeſt deſart, not only ſupportable, but delightful to them.

The divine love makes us partake of an infinite happineſs.

10. In fine, a lover is miſerable, if the perſon whom he loveth be ſo. They who have made an exchange of hearts by love, get thereby an intereſt in one another's happineſs and miſery; and this makes love a troubleſome paſſion, when placed on earth. The moſt fortunate perſon hath grief enough to mar the tranquillity of his friend: and it is hard to hold out, when we are attacked on all hands, and ſuffer not only in our own perſon, but in another's: But if God be the object of our love, we ſhare in an infinite happineſs.

neſs. We rejoice to behold the glory of God, and receive comfort and pleaſure from all the praiſes wherewith men and angels extol him. It delights us beyond expreſſion to conſider, that the Beloved of our ſouls is infinitely happy in himſelf, and that all his enemies cannot ſhake or unſettle his throne: *That our God is in the heavens, and doth whatever pleaſeth him.*

Behold, on what ſure foundations his happineſs is built, whoſe ſoul is poſſeſſed with divine love, whoſe will is transformed into the will of God, and whoſe ſole deſire is, that his Maker ſhould be pleaſed! O the peace, the reſt, the ſatisfaction, that attendeth ſuch a temper of mind!

He that loveth God finds ſweetneſs in every diſpenſation.

11. What an infinite pleaſure muſt it needs be, thus as it were to loſe ourſelves in him; and, being ſwallowed up in the overcoming ſenſe of his goodneſs, to offer ourſelves a living ſacrifice, always aſcending unto him in flames of love? Never doth a ſoul know what ſolid joy is, till it give itſelf up unto the author of its being, and feel itſelf become a devoted thing; and can ſay, from an inward ſenſe and feeling, *My Beloved is mine, and I am his:* I am content to be any thing for him, and care not for myſelf, but that I may ſerve him. A perſon moulded into this temper, finds pleaſure in all the diſpenſations of providence: temporal enjoyments have another re-

liſh, when he taſtes the divine goodneſs in them, and conſiders them as tokens of love ſent by his deareſt Lord and Maker: and chaſtiſements hereby loſe their ſting; the rod, as well as the ſtaff, comfort him: he rejoices, that though God does not the will of ſuch a worthleſs creature as himſelf, yet he accompliſhes his own deſigns; which are infinitely more holy and wiſe.

The duties of religion are delightful to him.

12. The exerciſes of religion, which to others are inſipid, yield the higheſt pleaſure to ſouls poſſeſſed with divine love: they rejoice when they are called to *go up to the houſe of the Lord*, that they may *ſee his power and his glory, as they have formerly ſeen it in his ſanctuary* †. They never think themſelves ſo happy, as when, having retired from the world, they have placed themſelves in the preſence of God, and entertain communion with him: they delight to adore his perfections, and recount his favours; and to proteſt their affection to him, and tell him a thouſand times that they love him; to lay out their troubles or wants before him, and diſburthen their hearts in his boſom. Repentance itſelf is a delightful exerciſe, when it floweth from the principle of love. There is a ſecret ſweetneſs which accompanies thoſe tears of remorſe, thoſe meltings of a ſoul returning unto God, and lamenting its former unkindneſs.

13. The ſeverities of a holy life, and that conſtant watch which we are obliged to keep over our

† Pſal. lxiii. 2.

our hearts and ways, are troubleſome to thoſe who are only ruled by an external law, and have no law in their minds inclining them to their duty. But where divine love poſſeſſeth the ſoul, it ſtands as centinel to keep out every thing that may offend the Beloved. It complieth chearfully, not only with explicit commands, but with the moſt ſecret notices of the Beloved's pleaſure; and is ingenious in diſcovering what will be moſt grateful and acceptable unto him. It makes mortification and ſelf-denial change their harſh and dreadful names, and become eaſy, ſweet and delightful things.

The excellency of charity.

14. The next branch of the divine life is *univerſal love* to man. The excellency of this grace will be eaſily acknowledged; for what can be more noble than a heart enlarged to embrace the whole world? Whoſe wiſhes and deſigns are levelled at the welfare of the univerſe, which conſidereth every man's intereſt as its own? He, who loveth his neighbour as himſelf, can never entertain any baſe or injurious thought, or be wanting in any expreſſions of bounty. He had rather ſuffer a thouſand wrongs, than be guilty of one; and never accounts himſelf happy, but when ſome one or other hath been benefited by him. The malice or ingratitude of men is not able to reſiſt his love. He overlooks their injuries, and pities their folly, and overcomes their evil with good; and never deſigns any other

revenge againſt his moſt bitter and malicious enemies, than to put all the obligations he can upon them, whether they will or not. This inward goodneſs and benignity of ſpirit reflects a ſweetneſs and ſerenity upon the very countenance, and makes it amiable and lovely: it inſpires the ſoul with a noble reſolution and courage, and makes it capable of enterpriſing and effecting the higheſt things: thoſe heroic actions which we are wont to read with admiration, have, for the moſt part, been the effects of the love of one's country, or of particular friendſhips; and certainly a more extenſive affection muſt be much more powerful and efficacious.

The pleaſure that attends it.

15. Again, as *charity* flows from an excellent temper, ſo it is accompanied with the greateſt ſatisfaction. It delights the ſoul to feel itſelf thus enlarged; to be delivered from thoſe diſquieting paſſions, malice, hatred, and envy; and to become gentle, ſweet, and benign. Had I my choice of all things for my preſent felicity, I would pitch upon this, to have my heart poſſeſſed with the greateſt kindneſs and affection towards all men. I am ſure this would make me partake in all the happineſs of others, their inward endowments, and outward proſperity. And though I ſhould frequently meet with occaſions of grief, yet there is a ſweetneſs in commiſeration, which makes it infinitely more deſirable than a ſtupid inſenſibility. And the conſide-

ration

ration of that infinite goodneſs and wiſdom, which govern the world, might repreſs any exceſſive trouble for particular calamities that happen in it. Certainly, next to the love of God, that ardent affection wherewith bleſſed ſouls embrace one another, is juſtly to be reckoned as the greateſt felicity of thoſe regions above. And did it univerſally prevail in the world, it would anticipate that bleſſedneſs, and make us taſte the joys of heaven upon earth.

The excellency of purity.

16. A third branch of religion is *purity*; a contempt of ſenſual pleaſures, and reſoluteneſs to undergo thoſe troubles and pains we may meet with in the performance of our duty. Now, the naming of this may ſuffice to recommend it as a moſt excellent quality. There is no ſlavery ſo baſe, as that whereby a man becomes a drudge to his own luſts. Never can that perſon be capable of any thing noble, who is ſunk in the groſs pleaſures of ſenſe, or bewitched with the airy gratifications of fancy. But the religious ſoul is of a more ſublime and divine temper. It knows it was made for higher things, and ſcorns to ſtep aſide one foot out of the ways of holineſs, for obtaining any of theſe.

The delight it affords.

17. And this *purity* is accompanied with a great deal of pleaſure. Whatſoever defiles the ſoul diſturbs it too. All impure delights have a ſting in them, and leave ſmart and trouble behind

them. Exceſs and intemperance, and all inordinate luſts, are ſo much enemies to the health of the body, and the intereſts of this preſent life, that a little conſideration might oblige any rational man to forbear them on that very ſcore. And if the religious perſon go higher, and do not only abſtain from noxious pleaſures, but neglect thoſe that are innocent, this is not to be looked upon as any uneaſy reſtraint, but as the effect of better choice: his mind is ſo taken up with ſublime delights, that he cannot be concerned in theſe. Any perſon that is engaged in a violent affection, will eaſily forget his ordinary gratification; will be little curious about his diet, or his bodily eaſe, or the divertiſements he was wont to delight in. No wonder then, if ſouls, overpowered with divine love, deſpiſe inferior pleaſures, and be almoſt ready to grudge the body its neceſſary attendance for the common accommodations of life, judging all theſe impertinent to their main happineſs, and thoſe higher enjoyments they are purſuing. As for the hardſhips they may meet with, they rejoice in them, as opportunities to teſtify their affection: and ſince they are able to do ſo little for God, they are glad of the honour to ſuffer for him.

The excellency of humility.

18. The laſt branch of religion is *humility*; and however, to vulgar eyes, this may appear a deſpicable quality, yet, really, the ſoul of man is not capable of a higher and more noble endowment.

ment. It is a ſilly ignorance that begets pride; but humility ariſes from a nearer acquaintance with excellent things, which keeps men from doating on trifles, or admiring themſelves becauſe of ſome petty attainments.

I know not what thoughts people may have of *humility*, but I ſee almoſt every perſon pretending to it, and ſhunning ſuch expreſſions and actions as may make them be accounted arrogant and preſumptuous; ſo that thoſe who are moſt deſirous of praiſe, are loth to commend themſelves. What are all thoſe compliments and modes of civility ſo frequently in our ordinary converſe, but ſo many proteſtations of the eſteem of others, and the low thoughts we have of ourſelves? And muſt not humility be an excellent endowment, when the very ſhadows of it are ſo neceſſary a part of good breeding?

The pleaſure and ſweetneſs of an humble temper.

19. Again, this grace is accompanied with a great deal of happineſs. The proud perſon is a trouble to all that converſe with him, but moſt of all to himſelf. Every thing is enough to vex him; but ſcarce any thing ſufficient to pleaſe him. But the humble perſon hath the advantage when he is deſpiſed, that none can think more meanly of him than he doth of himſelf; and as he is leſs affected with injuries, ſo he is leſs obnoxious to them. *Contention, which cometh of pride*, betrays a man into a thouſand inconveniences, which thoſe of a meek and lowly temper

ſeldom

ſeldom meet with. True humility begets veneration among wiſe men, whilſt pride defeateth its own deſign, and depriveth a man of that honour it makes him pretend to.

20. And the exerciſes of humility which relate to God, are accompanied with the greateſt ſatisfaction. It is impoſſible to expreſs the delight which religious perſons feel in the loweſt proſtrations of their ſoul before God; when having a deep ſenſe of the divine Majeſty, they ſink (if I may ſo ſpeak) to the bottom of their beings, and vaniſh and diſappear in the preſence of God, by a ſerious and affectionate acknowledgement of their own nothingneſs; when they underſtand the full ſenſe of the pſalmiſt's exclamation, *Lord, what is man?* And can utter it with the ſame affection. Never did any haughty perſon receive the praiſes of men with ſo much pleaſure as the humble renounce them, *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory.*

21. Thus I have ſpoken ſomething of the excellencies and advantages of religion in its ſeveral branches. Let us acquaint ourſelves with it, and experience will teach us more than all that ever hath been ſpoken or written concerning it. If we may ſuppoſe the ſoul to be already awakened unto ſome longing deſires after ſo great a bleſſedneſs, it will be good to give them vent, and ſuffer them to iſſue forth in ſome ſuch aſpirations as theſe.

A PRAYER.

A PRAYER.

GOOD God! what a mighty felicity is this to which we are called? How graciously hast thou joined our duty and happiness together, and prescribed that for our work, the performance whereof is a great reward? And shall such silly worms be advanced to so great a height? Wilt thou allow us to raise our eyes to thee? Wilt thou admit and accept our affection? Shall we receive the impression, of thy divine excellencies, by beholding and admiring them, and partake of thy infinite blessedness and glory, by loving thee, and rejoicing in them? O the happiness of those souls that are disintangled from every narrow good; whose understandings are enlightened by the holy Spirit, and their wills enlarged to the extent of thine; who love thee above all things, and all mankind for thy sake! I am persuaded, O God, I am persuaded, that I can never be happy, till my corrupt affections be mortified, and the pride and vanity of my spirit subdued, and till I come seriously to despise the world, and think nothing of myself. But O when shall it once be? O when wilt thou come unto me, and satisfy my soul with thy likeness, making me holy as thou art holy, even in all manner of conversation? Hast thou given me a prospect of so great a felicity, and wilt thou not bring me unto it? Hast thou excited these desires in my soul, and wilt thou not also satisfy them? O teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God; thy Spirit is good, lead me unto the land

of

of uprightneſs. Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's ſake, and perfect that which concerneth me. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever, forſake not the work of thine own hands.

The deſpondent thoughts of ſome newly awakened to a right ſenſe of things.

1. I HAVE hitherto conſidered wherein true religion conſiſts, and how deſirable a thing it is; but when one ſees how infinitely diſtant he is from it, he may perhaps be ready to deſpond: he may ſit down in ſadneſs, and bemoan himſelf, and ſay, in the anguiſh of his ſpirit, "They are happy indeed whoſe ſouls enjoy the "divine life, who are thus renewed in the ſpi- "rit of their minds; but alas! I am quite of "another conſtitution. If outward obſervances "could have done, I might have hoped to ac- "quit myſelf: but ſince nothing but a new na- "ture can ſerve, what am I able to do? I could "give all my goods to the poor, but cannot com- "mand that love, without which this would pro- "fit me nothing. This gift of God cannot be "purchaſed with money†. If a man ſhould give "all the ſubſtance of his houſe for love, it "would be utterly contemned‡. I could pine "my body; but I cannot ſtarve my corruptions, "nor wean my affections from earthly things.

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† Acts viii. 20. ‡ Cant. viii. 7.

" I am many times convinced of my own vile-
" neſs; but this rather begets diſcontent in me,
" than true humility; and though I ſhould come
" to think meanly of myſelf, yet I cannot en-
" dure that others ſhould think ſo too. In a
" word, when I reflect on my moſt ſpecious at-
" tainments, I have reaſon to ſuſpect that they
" are all but the effects of nature; and ſin is
" ſo powerful and ſo deeply rooted in me, that
" I can never hope to be delivered from it. I
" may toſs and turn as a door on the hinges,
" but can never get clear off; ſo that all the ad-
" vantage I can draw from the diſcovery of reli-
" gion, is but to ſee, at a huge diſtance, that
" felicity which I am not able to reach; like a
" man in a ſhipwreck, who diſcerns the land,
" and envies the happineſs of thoſe there, but
" cannot himſelf get aſhore."

The unreaſonableneſs of theſe fears.

2. Theſe, or ſuch-like thoughts, may ariſe in the minds of thoſe who begin to conceive the nature and excellency of religion. They have ſpied the land, and ſeen that it is exceeding good, that it floweth with milk and honey; but they find they have the children of *Anak* to grapple with, powerful corruptions to overcome, and they fear they ſhall never prevail againſt them. But why ſhould we give way to ſuch diſcouraging ſuggeſtions? Why ſhould we entertain ſuch unreaſonable fears, which damp our ſpirits and weaken our hands, and augment the difficulties

culties of our way? Let us encourage ourſelves with thoſe mighty aids we are to expect in this ſpiritual warfare; for greater is he that is for us, than all that can riſe up againſt us. *The eternal God is our refuge, and underneath are the everlaſting arms. Let us be ſtrong in the Lord, and the power of his might*; for he it is that ſhall *tread down our enemies*. God hath a tender regard to the ſouls of men, and is infinitely willing to promote their welfare. He hath condeſcended to our weakneſs, and declared with an oath, that he hath no pleaſure in our deſtruction. There is no ſuch thing as deſpite in the boſom of that ever bleſſed being, whoſe name and nature is love. He created us at firſt in a happy condition, and now when we are fallen from it, *he hath laid help upon one that is mighty to ſave*†, hath committed the care of our ſouls to no meaner a perſon than the eternal Son of his love. It is he that is the captain of our ſalvation, and what enemies can be too ſtrong for us, when we are fighting under his banner? Did not the Son of God come down from the boſom of his Father, and pitch his tabernacle amongſt men, that he might recover them to the divine life, and reſtore the image of God in their ſouls? All the mighty works he performed, all the afflictions he ſuſtained, had this for their ſcope and deſign: for this did he labour and toil; for this did he bleed

† Pſal. lxxxix. 19.

bleed and die. *He was with child, he was in pain, and hath he brought forth nothing but wind* †? *Hath he wrought no deliverance in the earth? Shall he not ſee of the travail of his ſoul* ‡? Certainly it is impoſſible that this great contrivance of heaven ſhould prove abortive, that ſuch a mighty undertaking ſhould miſcarry. It hath already been effectual for the ſalvation of many thouſands, who were once as far from the kingdom of heaven as we. And our *high prieſt continueth for ever, and is able to ſave them to the uttermoſt that come unto God by him* §. He is tender and compaſſionate; he knoweth our infirmities, and had experience of our temptations. *A bruiſed reed will he not break, and ſmoaking flax will he not quench, till he ſend forth judgment unto victory* ‖. He hath ſent out his Holy Spirit, whoſe ſweet but powerful breathings are ſtill moving up and down in the world, to quicken the ſouls of men, and awaken them unto the ſenſe and feeling of thoſe divine things for which they were made. He is ready to aſſiſt ſuch weak and languiſhing creatures as we are, in our eſſays towards holineſs. And when once it hath taken hold of a ſoul, and kindled in it the ſmalleſt ſpark of divine love, will he not preſerve and cheriſh, and bring it forth into a flame, which many waters ſhall not quench *. Whenever this *their*

† Iſa. xxvi. 18. ‡ Iſa. liii. 11. § Heb. vii. 24, 25.
‖ Matt. xii. 29. * Cant. viii. 7.

day begins to dawn, and *the day-ſtar to riſe in their heart* †, it will diſpel the powers of darkneſs, and make ignorance and folly, and all corrupt affections, flee away as faſt before it as the ſhades of night, when the ſun cometh out of his chambers. *For the path of the juſt is as the ſhining light, which ſhineth more and more unto the perfect day* ‡. *They ſhall go on from ſtrength to ſtrength, till every one of them appear before God in Sion* §.

3. Why ſhould we think it impoſſible that true goodneſs and univerſal love ſhould come to ſway and prevail in our ſouls? Is not this their primitive condition, as they came out of the hands of their maker? Sin and corruption are but uſurpers; and though they have long kept the poſſeſſion, yet *from the beginning it was not ſo.* That inordinate ſelf-love which one would think were interwoven with our nature, is nevertheleſs of foreign extraction, and had no place at all in the ſtate of integrity. We have ſtill ſo much reaſon left as to condemn it. Our underſtandings are eaſily convinced that we ought to be wholly devoted to him from whom we have our being, and to love him infinitely more than ourſelves, who is infinitely better than we. And our wills would readily comply with this, if they were not diſordered and out of tune. And is not he who made our ſouls able to mend them again? Shall

† 2 Pet. 1. 19. ‡ Prov. iv. 18. § Pſal. lxxxiv. 7.

Shall we not be able, by his assistance, to vanquish and expel those violent intruders, *and turn unto flight the armies of the aliens*†.

4. No sooner shall we take up arms in this holy war, but we shall have all the saints on earth, and all the angels in heaven engaged on our side. The holy church throughout the world is daily interceding with God for the success of all such endeavours. And doubtless those heavenly hosts above, are nearly concerned in the interests of religion, and infinitely desirous to see the divine life prevailing in this inferior world, and that the will of God may be done by us on earth, as it is done by them in heaven. May we not then encourage ourselves, as the prophet did his servant, when he shewed him the horses and chariots of fire, *Fear not, for they that be with us, are more than they that are against us* ‡?

We must do what we can, and depend on the divine assistance.

5. Away then with all desponding thoughts. To undertake vigorously, and rely confidently on the divine assistance, is more than half the conquest: *Let us arise and be doing, and the Lord will be with us* §. It is true, religion in the souls of men is the immediate work of God, and all our natural endeavours can neither produce it alone, nor merit those supernatural aids by which it

† Heb. xi. 34. ‡ 2 Kings vi. 16, 17. § 1 Chron. xxii. 16.

it muſt be wrought. The Holy Ghoſt muſt come upon us, and the power of the Higheſt overſhadow us, before that holy thing can be begotten, and Chriſt formed in us. But yet we muſt not expect that this work ſhould be done without any endeavours of our own; we muſt not lie loitering in the ditch, and wait till omnipotence pull us thence; no, no, we muſt beſtir ourſelves, and actuate theſe powers which we have already received. We muſt put forth ourſelves to our utmoſt capacities, and then *our labour ſhall not be vain in the Lord*‖. All the art and induſtry of man cannot form the ſmalleſt herb, or make a ſtalk of corn to grow in the field. It is the energy of nature, and the influences of heaven, which produce this effect. It is God *who cauſeth the graſs to grow, and herb for the ſervice of man*†; and yet nobody will ſay that the labours of the huſbandman are uſeleſs or unneceſſary. So likewiſe the human ſoul is immediately created by God; it is he who both formeth and enliveneth the child, and yet he hath appointed the marriage-bed as the ordinary means for the propagation of mankind: and ſo, though there muſt intervene a ſtroke of omnipotence to effect this mighty change in our ſouls; yet ought we to do what we can, that we may be more ready to receive the ſeeds of grace and the dew of heaven. It is true, God hath been found

‖ 1 Cor. xv. 58. † Pſal. civ. 14.

found of ſome who ſought him not; he hath caſt himſelf in their way who were quite out of his; he hath laid hold upon them, and ſtopt their courſe on a ſudden; for ſo was St. *Paul* converted in his journey to *Damaſcus*. But certainly this is not God's ordinary method of dealing with men: though he hath not tied himſelf to means, yet he hath tied us to the uſe of them; and we have never more reaſon to expect the divine aſſiſtance, than when we are doing our utmoſt endeavours. It ſhall therefore be my next work to ſhew what courſe we may take for attaining that bleſſed temper I have deſcribed.

We muſt ſhun all manner of ſin.

6. Now if we deſire to have our ſouls moulded to this holy frame, and have Chriſt formed in our hearts, we muſt carefully avoid all ſinful practices. There can be no treaty of peace, till we lay down theſe weapons of rebellion wherewith we fight againſt heaven; nor can we expect to have our diſtempers cured, if we be daily feeding on poiſon. Every wilful ſin gives a mortal wound to the ſoul, and puts it at a greater diſtance from God. And we can never hope to have our hearts purified from corrupt affections, till our hands are cleanſed from vicious actions.

We muſt know what things are ſinful.

7. And, firſt, Let us inform ourſelves well what thoſe ſins are from which we ought to abſtain.

ſtain. And here we muſt not take our meaſures from the maxims of the world, or the practices of thoſe whom in charity, we account good men. Moſt people have very light apprehenſions of theſe things, and are not ſenſible of any fault, unleſs it be groſs. And thoſe who are more ſerious, many times allow themſelves too great latitude. Alas! how much pride, and vanity, and paſſion; how much weakneſs and folly doth every day ſhow itſelf in their converſe and behaviour! It may be they are humbled for it, and ſtriving againſt it, but the progreſs is ſo ſmall, and their failings ſo many, that we had need to chuſe an exacter pattern. Every one of us muſt anſwer for himſelf, and the practice of others will never warrant and ſecure us. It is the higheſt folly to regulate our actions by any other ſtandard, than that by which they muſt be judged. If ever therefore we would *cleanſe our way*, it muſt be *by taking heed thereto according to the word of God* †. And that *word which is quick and powerful, and ſharper than any two-edged ſword, piercing even to the dividing aſunder of ſoul and ſpirit, and of the joints and marrow* ‡, will certainly diſcover many things to be ſinful, which paſs for very innocent in the eyes of the world. Let us therefore imitate the pſalmiſt, who ſaith, *Concerning the works of men, by the words of thy lips, I have kept myſelf from the path of the deſtroyer* §. Let us acquaint ourſelves

† Pſal. cxix. 9. ‡ Heb. iv. 12. § Pſal. xvii. 4.

ſelves well with the holy laws of our religion: let us conſider the diſcourſes of our bleſſed Saviour, (eſpecially that divine ſermon on the mount) and the writings of his holy apoſtles; where an unbiaſſed mind may clearly diſcern thoſe bounds by which our actions ought to be confined: and then let us never look upon any ſin as light and inconſiderable, but be fully perſuaded, that the ſmalleſt is infinitely heinous in the ſight of God, and prejudicial to the ſouls of men: and that if we had the right ſenſe of things, we ſhould be as deeply affected with the leaſt irregularities, as now we are with the greateſt crimes.

We muſt reſiſt temptations.

8. Among thoſe things which we diſcover to be ſinful, there will be ſome to which, through our nature, or long cuſtom, we are ſo wedded, that it will be like cutting of the right-hand, or pulling out the right-eye, to abandon them. But muſt we therefore ſit down and wait till all difficulties be over, and every temptation be gone? This were to imitate the fool in the poet, who ſtood the whole day at the river-ſide, till all the water ſhould run by. We muſt not indulge our inclinations, as we do little children, till they grow weary of the thing they are unwilling to let go. We muſt not continue our ſinful practices, in hopes that the divine grace will one day over-power us.

9. If the heinous nature of ſin cannot affect us, at leaſt we may be frighted by its dreadful conſe-

quences. That felfifh principle which puſheth us forward to ſinful pleaſures, may make us loath to buy them at the rate of everlaſting miſery. Let us therefore accuſtom ourſelves to conſider ſeriouſly what a fearful thing it muſt be to offend that infinite Being, on whom we depend every moment; who needs but withdraw his mercies to make us miſerable, or his aſſiſtance to make us nothing. Let us remember the ſhortneſs and uncertainty of our lives, and that after we have taken a few turns more in the world, and converſed a little longer amongſt men, we muſt all go down to the dark and ſilent grave, and carry nothing along with us but anguiſh and regret for all our ſinful enjoyments. What horror muſt then ſeize the guilty ſoul, to find itſelf naked and all alone before the impartial judge of the world, to render an exact account, not only of its more conſiderable tranſactions, but of every word that the tongue hath uttered, and the moſt ſecret thought that ever paſſed through the mind? Let us repreſent to ourſelves the terrors of that dreadful day, when *the foundations of the earth ſhall be ſhaken, the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat*†. The preſent frame of nature ſhall be diſſolved, and our eyes ſhall behold the bleſſed Jeſus, (who came once into the world in all humility to viſit us, to purchaſe pardon for us, and beſeech us to accept of it) now appearing in the

† 2 Pet. iii. 10.

the majesty of his glory, and descending from heaven *in flaming fire, to take vengeance on those* that have despised his mercy. Then all the hidden things of darkness shall be brought to light, and the counsels of the heart made manifest†. Then those secret impurities and subtle frauds whereof the world did never suspect us, shall be exposed and laid open to public view; and many thousand actions which we never dreamed to be sinful, shall be charged home upon our consciences, with such evident convictions of guilt, that we shall neither be able to deny, or excuse them. Then shall all the angels in heaven, and all the saints that ever lived on the earth, approve that dreadful sentence which shall be passed on wicked men; and those who loved and esteemed them when in the world, shall look upon them with indignation and abhorrence.

10. 'Tis true, this is a melancholy subject; there is horror in the consideration of it: but sure it must be infinitely more dreadful to endure it; and such thoughts as these may be useful to fright us from the courses that would lead us thither. How fond soever we may be of sinful pleasures, we shall startle when pressed with that question, *Who can dwell with everlasting burnings*‡.

We must keep a constant watch over ourselves.

11. But it will not suffice to consider those things once and again, nor to form some resolu-

† 1 Cor. iv. 5. ‡ Isa. xxxiii. 14.

tions of abandoning our ſins, unleſs we maintain a conſtant guard, and be conſtantly watching againſt them. Sometimes the mind is awakened, and we reſolve to reform: but alas! it preſently falleth aſleep, and we loſe that proſpect which we had, and then temptations take the advantage; they ſolicit us continually, and frequently engage our conſent before we are aware. It is the folly and ruin of moſt people to live at adventure, ſeldom conſidering what they are about to ſay or do. If we would have our reſolutions take effect, we muſt take heed unto our ways, ſet a watch before the door of our lips, and examine the motions that ariſe in our heart, whence they come, and whither they go; whether it be pride or paſſion, or any corrupt humour, that prompteth us to any deſign, and whether God will be pleaſed with it? And if we have no time for long reaſonings, let us at leaſt turn our eyes towards God, and place ourſelves in his preſence, to aſk his leave and approbation for what we do. Let us conſider ourſelves under the all-ſeeing eye of that divine majeſty, as in the midſt of an infinite globe of light; which compaſſeth us about both behind and before, and pierceth to the inmoſt corners of our ſoul. The ſenſe of the divine preſence is a ready means, both to diſcover what is unlawful, and to reſtrain us from it. There are ſome things a perſon could make a ſhift to defend, and yet he dares not look God in the face, and adventure upon them. If we look

look unto him we shall be lightned; if we *set him always before us*, he will *guide us by his eye, and instruct us in the way wherein we ought to walk.*

We must often examine our actions.

12. This care and watchfulness over our actions, must be seconded by frequent and serious reflections upon them; not only that we may obtain the divine mercy; but that we may strengthen our resolutions, and learn to decline or resist temptations. It is an advice worthy of a Christian, though it first dropped from a Heathen pen, that before we betake ourselves to rest, we renew and examine all the passages of the day, that we may redress what we find to have been amiss, and make the shipwrecks of one day be as marks to direct our course in another. But, withal, we must not forget to implore the divine assistance, especially against those sins that most easily beset us: and though our hearts are not yet moulded into that spiritual frame, yet methinks such considerations as have been proposed may stir us up to some seriousness, and make our prayers against it as earnest, at least, as they are wont to be against other calamities; and I doubt not but God, who heareth the cry of the ravens, will have some regard even to such petitions as proceed from those natural passions which himself hath implanted in us.

It is fit to restrain ourselves in many lawful things.

13. Thus we are to make the first essay for recovering the divine life, by restraining the na-

tural inclinations, that they break not out into finful practices. But Chriſtian prudence will teach us to abſtain from gratifications that are not ſimply unlawful; and that not only that we may ſecure our innocence, which would be in continual hazard, if we ſhould ſtrain our liberty to the utmoſt point; but alſo that we may teach our appetites to obey, as prudent parents deal with their children, who croſs their wills in many little things, to make them manageable in more conſiderable inſtances. He who would mortify the pride and vanity of his ſpirit, ſhould ſtop his ears to the moſt deſerved praiſes, and ſometimes forbear his juſt vindication, from the cenſures and aſperſions of others. He who would check a revengeful humour, would do well to deny himſelf the ſatisfaction of repreſenting to others the injuries he hath ſuſtained. And if we would ſo take heed to our ways, that we ſin not with our tongue, we muſt accuſtom ourſelves to ſolitude and ſilence. Thus we may make our appetites more moderate in their cravings, by accuſtoming them to frequent refuſals; but it is not enough to have them under violence and reſtraint.

We muſt ſtrive to put ourſelves out of love with the world,

14. Our next eſſay muſt be to poſſeſs our minds with a deep perſuaſion of the vanity and emptineſs of worldly enjoyments. This is an ordinary theme, but alas! how few underſtand and

and believe what they ſay? Theſe notions floàt in our brains, and come ſliding off our tongues, but we have no deep impreſſion of them on our ſpirits. We feel not the truth which we pretend to believe. We can tell that all the glory and ſplendor, all the pleaſures of the world, are vanity and nothing; and yet theſe nothings take up all our thoughts, and engroſs all our affections. Perhaps ſometimes we reſolve to be no longer deluded with them; but theſe thoughts ſeldom outlive the next temptation. And after we have been fruſtrated a thouſand times, we muſt continually be repeating the experiment. The leaſt difference of circumſtances is enough to make us expect that ſatisfaction in one thing, which we miſſed in another. But had we once a real contempt of worldly things, this were a conſiderable advancement in our way. The ſoul of man is of a vigorous and active nature, and hath in it an unextinguiſhable thirſt, an immaterial kind of fire, always catching at ſome object or other, in conjunction wherewith it thinks to be happy: and were it once rent from the world, it would ſearch after ſome higher object, to ſatisfy its importunate cravings. The love of the world and the love of God, are like the ſcales of a balance, as the one falleth the other doth riſe. It therefore nearly concerns us to be convinced of the emptineſs and vanity of creature enjoyments. Let us ſeriouſly conſider

what our reaſon and faith, our own experience, and the obſervation of others ſuggeſt. Amidſt all our purſuits and deſigns, let us ſtop and aſk ourſelves, for what end is this? At what do I aim? Can the groſs pleaſures of ſenſe, or a heap of white or yellow earth, or the eſteem of ſilly creatures like myſelf, ſatisfy an immortal ſoul? Have I not tried theſe things already? Will they have a higher reliſh, and yield me more contentment to-morrow than yeſterday, or the next year than they did the laſt? There may be ſome little difference between that which I am now purſuing, and that which I enjoyed before: but ſure my former enjoyments did ſhew as pleaſant, and promiſe as fair before I attained them. Like the rainbow, they look very glorious at a diſtance, but when I approached, I found nothing but emptineſs and vapour. O what a poor thing would the life of man be, if it were capable of no higher enjoyments!

We muſt do thoſe outward actions that are commanded.

15. When our inclinations towards worldly things are in ſome meaſure ſubdued, we muſt proceed conſcientiouſly to perform thoſe duties which religion require. If we cannot get our inward diſpoſitions preſently changed, let us ſtudy at leaſt to regulate our outward deportment: if our hearts be not yet inflamed with divine love, let us however owe our allegiance to that infinite Majeſty, by attending his ſervice, and liſtening

to his word; by ſpeaking reverently of his name; and praiſing his goodneſs, and exhorting others to ſerve and obey him. If we want that charity, and thoſe bowels of compaſſion which we ought to have towards our neighbours, yet muſt we not omit any occaſion of doing them good. If our hearts be haughty and proud, we muſt nevertheleſs ſtudy a modeſt and humble deportment. Theſe external performances are of little value in themſelves, yet may they help us forward to better things. It is always good to be doing what we can, for then God is wont to aſſiſt our feeble endeavours. Nor need we fear the imputation of hypocriſy, though our actions thus ſomewhat out-run our affections, ſeeing they ſtill proceed from a ſenſe of our duty, and our deſign is not to appear better than we are, but that we may really become ſo.

We muſt endeavour to form internal acts of devotion, charity, &c.

16. Moreover, let us be often lifting up our hearts to God; and if we do not ſay that we love him above all things, let us at leaſt acknowledge that it is our duty, and would be our happineſs ſo to do. Let us lament the diſhonour done him by ſinful men, and applaud the praiſes that are given him by that glorious company above. Let us yield ourſelves up to him a thouſand times, to be governed by his laws, and diſpoſed of at his pleaſure: and though our ſtubborn heart ſtart back, yet let us tell him we are convinced

that his will is always juſt and good; and therefore deſire him to do with us whatſoever he pleaſeth, whether we will or not.

Thus ſhould we exerciſe ourſelves unto godlineſs: and when we are employing the powers that we have, the Spirit of God is wont to ſtrike in, and elevate theſe acts of our ſoul beyond the pitch of nature, and give them a divine impreſſion.

Conſideration a great inſtrument of religion.

17. I ſhall mention but two other helps; and the firſt is, deep and ſerious conſideration. * The aſſent which is ordinarily given to divine truths, is very faint and languid. Men are unwilling to quarrel with the religion of their country; but are ſeldom at the pains to conſider what they profeſs to believe; and thence it is, that they have ſo little influence on their practice. Thoſe *ſpiritleſs and paralytic thoughts* (as one rightly terms them) are not able to move the will, and direct the hand. We muſt therefore labour for a full perſuaſion of divine truths, a ſenſe and feeling of ſpiritual things. Let us urge forward our ſpirits, and make them approach the inviſible world, and fix our mind upon immaterial things, till we clearly perceive that theſe are no dreams; nay, that all things are dreams and ſhadows beſides them. When we look about us, and behold the beauty and magnificence of this goodly frame, the order and harmony of the whole creation, let our thoughts

from

from thence take their flight towards that omnipotent wisdom and goodness which did at first produce, and doth still uphold the same. When we reflect upon ourselves, let us consider that we are not a mere piece of organized matter, a curious and well contrived engine; that there is more in us than flesh, and blood, and bones, even a divine spark, capable to know, and love, and enjoy our Maker. And though it be now exceedingly clogged with its dull and lumpish companion; yet ere long it shall be delivered, and can subsist without the body, as well as that can do without the cloaths, which we throw off at our pleasure. Let us often withdraw our thoughts from this earth, this scene of misery, and folly, and sin, and raise them towards that glorious world; whose innocent and blessed inhabitants solace themselves eternally in the divine presence, and know no other passion, but an unmixed joy, and an unbounded love: and then consider how the blessed Son of God came down to this lower world to live among us, and die for us, that he might bring us to a portion of the same felicity; and think how he hath overcome the sharpness of death, and opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and is now set down on the *right-hand of the Majesty on high*†; and yet is not the less mindful of us, but receiveth our prayers, and presenteth them unto his Father, and is daily

† Heb. i. 3.

viſiting his church with the influences of his Spirit, as the ſun reacheth us with his beams.

We ſhould conſider the excellency of the divine nature.

18. Let me further ſuggeſt ſome particular ſubjects of meditation. And firſt, if we would love God, let us conſider the excellency of his nature, and his love and kindneſs towards us. It is little we know of the divine perfections; and yet that little may fill our ſouls with admiration and love. If it be the underſtanding that directs the affections, certainly the excellencies of the divine nature (the traces whereof we cannot but diſcover in every thing we behold) ſhould not fail to engage our hearts. Shall we not be infinitely more tranſported with that almighty wiſdom and goodneſs, which fills the univerſe, and diſplays itſelf in all the parts of the creation, which eſtabliſheth the frame of nature, and turneth the mighty wheels of providence, and keepeth the world from diſorder and ruin, than with the faint rays of the ſame perfections which we meet with in our fellow creatures? Shall we doat on the ſcattered pieces of a rude and imperfect picture, and never be affected with the original beauty? This were an unaccountable ſtupidity and blindneſs. Whatever we find lovely in a friend, or in a ſaint, ought not to engroſs, but to elevate our affection: we ſhould conclude with ourſelves, that if there be ſo much ſweetneſs in a drop, there muſt be infinitely more in the

the fountain. If there be ſo much ſplendor in a ray, what muſt the ſun be in its glory?

19. Nor can we pretend the remoteneſs of the object, as if God were at too great a diſtance for our converſe or love: *he is not far from every one of us; for in him we live, and move, and have our being.*† We cannot open our eyes, but we muſt behold ſome footſteps of his glory; and we cannot turn them toward him, but we ſhall be ſure to find his intent upon us, waiting as it were to catch a look, ready to entertain the moſt intimate communion with us. Let us therefore endeavour to raiſe our minds to the cleareſt conceptions of the divine nature. Let us conſider all that his works declare, or his word diſcovers of him unto us; and let us eſpecially contemplate that viſible repreſentation of him which was made in our own nature by his Son, who was *the brightneſs of his glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon.*‡ and who appeared in the world to diſcover at once what God is, and what we ought to be. Let us repreſent him unto our minds as we find him deſcribed in the goſpel, and there we ſhall behold the perfections of the divine nature, tho' covered with the veil of human infirmities. And while we contemplate a Being, infinite in power, in wiſdom, and goodneſs, the author and fountain of all perfections, let us pray that our eyes may affect our heart,‖ and while we are muſing the fire may burn.§

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† Acts xvii. 27. ‡ Heb. i. 3. ‖ Lam. iii. 51. § Pſal. xxxix. 3.

We ſhould meditate on his goodneſs and love.

20. Hereunto add the conſideration of God's favour and goodwill towards us. Now as the word of God is full of the expreſſions of his love towards man, ſo all his works loudly proclaim it. He gave us our being, and by preſerving us in it, doth renew the donation every moment. He hath placed us in a rich and well-furniſhed world, and liberally provided for all our neceſſities. He raineth down bleſſings from heaven upon us, and cauſeth the earth to bring forth our proviſion. He giveth us our food and raiment; and while we are ſpending the productions of one year, he is preparing for us againſt another. He ſweeteneth our lives with innumerable comforts, and gratifieth every faculty with ſuitable objects. The eye of his providence is always upon us, and he watcheth for our ſafety when we are faſt aſleep, neither minding him nor ourſelves. But leſt we ſhould think theſe teſtimonies of his kindneſs leſs conſiderable, becauſe they are the eaſy iſſues of his omnipotent power, and do not put him to any trouble or pain, he hath taken a more wonderful method to endear himſelf to us. He hath teſtified his affection to us, by ſuffering as well as by doing; and becauſe he could not ſuffer in his own nature, he aſſumed ours. The eternal Son of God cloathed himſelf with the infirmities of our fleſh, and left the company of thoſe bleſſed ſpirits, who knew well how to love and adore him, that he might dwell among

among men, and wreſtle with the obſtinacy of that rebellious race to reduce them to their allegiance, and to offer himſelf up as a ſacrifice for them. I remember one of the poets hath an ingenious fancy to expreſs the paſſion wherewith he found himſelf overcome after a long reſiſtance, *That the God of love had ſhot all his golden arrows at him, but could never pierce his heart, till at length he put himſelf into the bow, and darted himſelf ſtraight into his breaſt.* Methinks this doth ſomeway adumbrate God's method of dealing with men: he had long contended with a ſtubborn world, and thrown down many a bleſſing upon them; and when all his other gifts could not prevail, he at laſt made a gift of himſelf. The account which we have of our Saviour's life in the goſpel doth all along preſent us with the ſtory of his love. All the pains that he took, and the troubles that he endured, were the wonderful effects, and uncontroulable evidences of it. But, O that laſt, that diſmal ſcene! Is it poſſible to remember it, and queſtion his kindneſs, or deny him ours? Here, here it is we ſhould fix our moſt ſerious thoughts, *that Chriſt may dwell in our hearts by faith; that we being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the breadth and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulneſs of God!*†

21. We

† Eph. iii. 17, 18, 19.

21. We ought alſo frequently to reflect on thoſe particular tokens of love, which God hath beſtowed on ourſelves; how long he hath borne with our follies and ſins, and waited to be gracious unto us; wreſtling, as it were, with the ſtubbornneſs of our hearts, and eſſaying every method to reclaim us. We ſhould keep a regiſter in our minds of all the eminent bleſſings and deliverances we have met with; ſome whereof have been ſo conveyed, that we might clearly perceive they were not the iſſues of chance, but the gracious effects of the divine favour, and the ſignal returns of our prayers.

As a help to charity, we muſt remember that all men are nearly related to God.

22. If we would love all men, let us conſider the relation wherein they ſtand to God, and the impreſſes of his image, which are ſtamped upon them. They are not only his creatures, the workmanſhip of his hands, but ſuch of whom he taketh ſpecial care, and for whom he hath a very tender regard; having laid the deſigns of their happineſs before the foundations of the world; and being willing to live and converſe with them to all eternity. The meaneſt and moſt contemptible perſon whom we behold, is the offſpring of heaven, one of the children of the Moſt High; and, however unworthy he may behave himſelf of that relation to God, ſo long as God hath not diſowned himſelf by a final ſentence, he will have us acknowledge him as one

of

of his; and, as such, embrace him with a cordial affection. What a concern are we wont to have for those that any ways belong to the person whom we love? How gladly do we lay hold on every opportunity to gratify the child or servant of a friend? And sure our love towards God would as naturally spring forth in charity towards men, did we mind the interest that he is pleased to take in them; and consider that every soul is dearer to him than the material world; and that he did not account the blood of his Son too great a price for their redemption.

That they carry his image upon them.

23. Again, as all men stand in a near relation to God, so they have still so much of his image stamped on them, as may excite us to love them. In some this image is more conspicuous, and we can discern the lovely tracts of wisdom and goodness. And though, in others, it be miserably sullied and defaced, yet it is not altogether erased. Some lineaments still remain: all men are endowed with rational and immortal souls, with understandings and wills capable of the most excellent things. And if they be at present disordered and put out of tune by wickedness and folly, this may indeed move our compassion, but ought not to extinguish our love. When we see a person of a rugged humour and perverse disposition, full of malice and dissimulation, very foolish, and very proud, it is hard to fall in love with an object that presents itself

itſelf unto us, under an idea ſo little grateful and lovely. But when we conſider theſe evil qualities as the diſeaſes of a ſoul, which in itſelf is capable of all that wiſdom and goodneſs, wherewith the beſt of ſaints have ever been adorned, this will turn our averſion into pity, and make us behold him with ſuch reſentments, as we have when we look on a beautiful body that is mangled with wounds, or diſfigured by ſome loathſome diſeaſe. And however we hate the vices we ſhall not ceaſe to love the man.

Prayer another inſtrument of religion; the advantages of mental prayer.

24. There remains yet another help; and that is, fervent prayer. Holineſs is the gift of God; indeed the greateſt gift he doth beſtow, or we are capable to receive, and he hath promiſed his Holy Spirit to thoſe that aſk it of him. In prayer we make the neareſt approaches to God, and lie open to the influences of heaven: then it is that the ſun of righteouſneſs doth viſit us with his directeſt rays, and diſſipateth our darkneſs, and imprinteth his image on our ſouls. I cannot now inſiſt on the advantages of this exerciſe, or the diſpoſitions wherewith it ought to be performed; I ſhall only tell you, that as there is one ſort of prayer, wherein we make uſe of the voice, which is neceſſary in public; and may ſometimes have its advantage in private; and another wherein, though we utter no ſound, yet we conceive

conceive the expreſſions, and form the words in our mind; ſo there is a third kind of prayer, wherein the ſoul takes a higher flight, and having collected all its forces, by long and ſerious meditation, it darteth itſelf (if I may ſo ſpeak) towards God, in ſighs and groans, and thoughts too big for expreſſion.

This mental prayer is one of the moſt powerful inſtruments of the divine life; and it may be the apoſtle hath a peculiar reſpect unto it, when he ſaith, that *the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, making interceſſion for us with groanings that cannot be uttered.*

The uſe of the holy ſacrament.

25. I ſhall recommend but one more help; and that is, the conſcientious uſe of that holy ſacrament, which is peculiarly appointed to nouriſh and increaſe the ſpiritual life, when once it is begotten in the ſoul. All the inſtruments of religion meet together in this ordinance; and while we addreſs ourſelves to it, we are put to practiſe all the rules which were mentioned before. Then it is that we make the ſevereſt ſurvey of our actions, and lay the ſtricteſt obligations on ourſelves: then are our minds raiſed to the higheſt contempt of the world, and every grace doth exerciſe itſelf with the greateſt activity and vigour. All the ſubjects of contemplation there preſent themſelves unto us with the greateſt advantage; and then, if ever, doth the ſoul make its moſt powerful ſallies towards heaven, and aſſault it with

with a holy and acceptable force. And certainly the neglect, or careleſs performance of this duty, is one of the chief cauſes that be-dwarfs our religion, and make us continue of ſo low a ſize.

A PRAYER.

AND now, O moſt gracious God, Father and fountain of mercy, who haſt bleſſed us with the knowledge of our happineſs, and the way that leadeth unto it, excite in our ſouls ſuch ardent deſires after the one as may put us forth to the diligent proſecution of the other. Let us neither preſume on our own ſtrength, nor diſtruſt thy aſſiſtance; but while we are doing our utmoſt endeavours, ſtill depend on thee for ſucceſs. Open our eyes, O God, and teach us out of thy law. Bleſs us with an exact and tender ſenſe of our duty, and a knowledge to diſcern perverſe things. O that our ways were directed to keep thy ſtatutes! Then ſhall we not be aſhamed when we have a reſpect unto all thy commandments. Poſſeſs our hearts with a generous and holy diſdain of all thoſe poor enjoyments which this world holdeth out to allure us, that they may never be able to inveigle our affections, or betray us to any ſin. Turn away our eyes from beholding vanity, and quicken thou us in thy law. Fill our ſouls with ſuch a deep ſenſe of thoſe great truths which thou haſt revealed in the goſpel,

gospel, as may influence and regulate our whole conversation: so that the life which we henceforth live in the flesh, we may live through faith in the Son of God. O that the infinite perfections of thy blessed nature, and the astonishing expressions of thy goodness may overpower our hearts; that they may be constantly rising towards thee in flames of devout affection, and enlarging themselves in cordial love towards all the world for thy sake; and that we may cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in thy fear, without which we can never hope to behold and enjoy thee. Finally, O God, grant that the consideration of what thou art, and what we ourselves are, may both humble and lay us low before thee, and also stir up in us the strongest and most ardent aspirations towards thee. We desire to give up ourselves to the conduct of thy Holy Spirit: lead us in thy truth, and teach us, for thou art the God of our salvation. Guide us with thy counsel, and afterwards receive us unto glory; for the merits and intercession of thy blessed Son, our Saviour. Amen.

The End of the EIGHTH VOLUME.

THE

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147	14	r ſo even
148	27	*dele as*
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197	10	r laſt
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242	2	r *for* virtues
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—	16	r boys *be*
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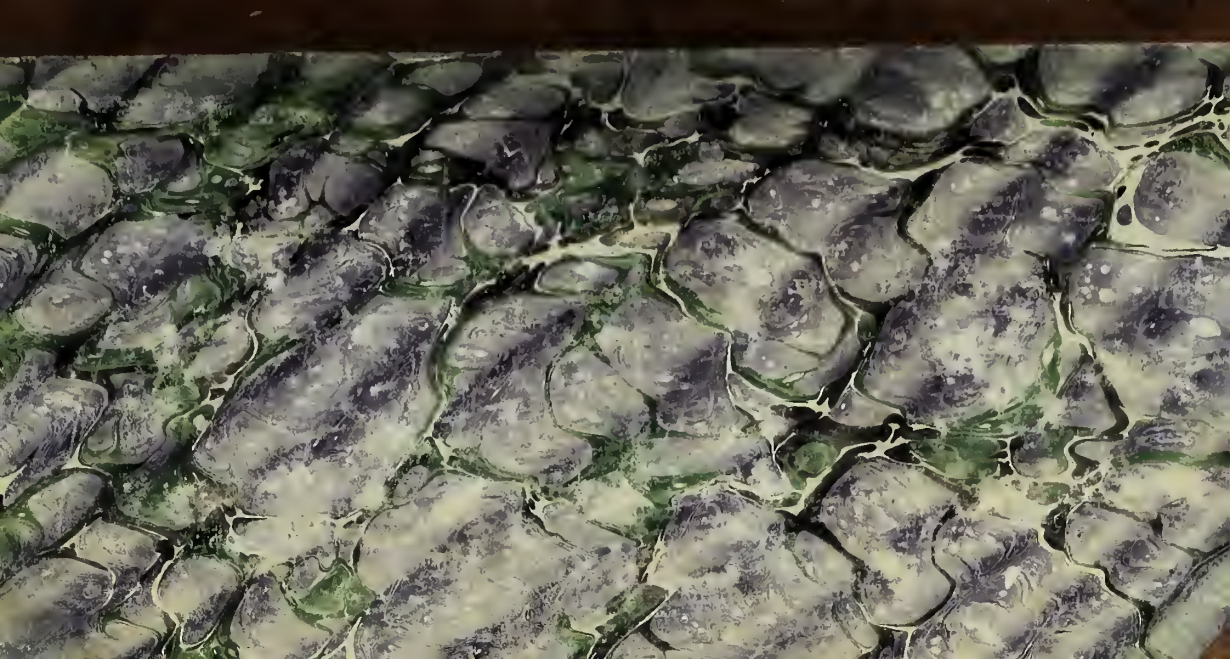
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